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## Gangs, Victim/Offender Overlap and Informal Settlements: Their Role in the Portmore Homicide Crisis

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Gangs, Victim/Offender Overlap and Informal Settlements: Their Role in the Portmore  
Homicide Crisis

by  
Jason A. McKay

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the  
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education  
and School of Criminal Justice in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University  
2020

## Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Jason McKay under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Philosophy at Nova Southeastern University.

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Jason A. McKay

July 23, 2020

## **Acknowledgments**

I would first like to thank Nova Southeastern University for allowing me to participate in this doctoral program and also to facilitate my research into the cycle of homicides in the community that I serve as a police officer. My relationship to the crisis that I have struggled with for so long, allowed for a level of passion that is required in studies of this depth.

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To the officers of the St. Catherine South Police Division in St. Catherine, Jamaica and in particular Detective Inspector Homer Morgan of the St. Catherine South Police Division and Detective Inspector Dubrick Stephens of the St. Catherine South Police Divisional Intelligence Unit, I say a big thank you. Without the man hours employed classifying each murder after detailed investigations from both your departments, this study would never have been accomplished. My hope is that this study will not only be a tool for you to use but be seen as the end result of your investigative prowess.

I would like lastly to thank my friend of 36 years Rodney McPherson for criticizing every line I wrote, whether I liked it or not. Your standard and expectation of excellence is one I hope to achieve one day.

This study is dedicated to the memory of the 381 victims of murder who lost their lives between 2015 and 2018; without a cause or a need.

## **Abstract**

Gangs, Victim/Offender Overlap and Informal Settlements: Their Role in the Portmore Homicide Crisis. Jason A. McKay, 2020 Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: Jamaica, Victim/Offender Overlap, Garrisons, Gang Intervention, Informal Settlements, Victimology

Escalating murder rates have been a pervasive reality in Jamaican inner cities and slums since the early 1970's; however the post independence housing development of Portmore was never envisaged to be classified as an inner city community, nor slum. This qualitative study seeks to explain the uncharacteristic cycle of murder that has afflicted this community by employing the approach of examining the victims of homicide, with an aim to determining the possible reasons that could explain the consistently high rate of murders that have been committed.

During the period January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, 381 souls were lost to the crime of murder in Portmore. These victims were analysed with an aim to determining their link, if any, to criminal activity, gang membership or gang affiliation. There was also an aim to determine the location of their deaths with the purpose of identifying murder victims between residents of formal and/or informal communities. Additionally, homicides committed in the neighbouring communities of Central Village and Old Harbour were also analysed, as they both had similar characteristics that allowed for identification and comparison.

The methodology used in the analysis and classification of each murder victim was drawn from the homicide investigative process of the St. Catherine South Police Division, through the analysis of the Divisional Intelligence Unit and the Criminal Investigations Branch reports. Through their use, and the collaboration of the units, the study was able to ascertain a system of classification of the homicide victims. The informal communities were found to be significant contributors to the homicide rate as, despite their contribution of only 10 percent of the population of Portmore, approximately 50 percent of all the murders took place there.

The study is critically important because it highlights the effects criminal activity, gang affiliation and association, and informal settlements have on homicide rates. The study, therefore, has island-wide applicability to Jamaica and other Caribbean jurisdictions that are afflicted with likewise conditions.

Theories are developed to explain phenomenon, and this paper seeks to formulate a theory to explain the high homicide rate in the community of Portmore. It goes on further to suggest corrective measures, through targeted intervention, to stem this rate and to disconnect the at-risk youth from the influencers that are contributing to the cycle of killing facilitated by the lure of gang membership.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The island of Jamaica, located in the somewhat tranquil waters of the Caribbean Sea, is regarded to many as a tropical paradise. Unfortunately, it is set apart from other Caribbean islands by a very dark characteristic: it is considered one of the most violent places in the world. Jamaica has had a rapidly rising homicide rate for over 30 years. Over time, Jamaica has developed a culture of violence (Lemard & Hemenway, 2006), with a homicide rate that has been exponentially increasing since 1970 (Bourne, Hudson-Davis, Sharpe-Pryce, Francis, Solan & Nelson, 2015), with a collective 33,000 of its inhabitants losing their lives to both wanton and systemic violence since 1970 (Bourne *et al*, 2015). There have been many attempts to reverse this culture of killing, and the construction and subsequent relocation of urban inner-city residents to the newly created community of Portmore in the parish of St. Catherine, beginning in 1962 and escalating during the 1990's, was one of them. The effort of building homes, with acceptable amenities and physical and social infrastructure, was undertaken *en masse* by successive governments with reasonable success between 1962 (the year Jamaica attained independent status from its colonial rulers) and 1999, with "...Jamaica's attempt to reframe and reconfigure the landscape through the planning of new towns and cities coinciding with the emergence of a new state regime and the ethos of self-determination that came with independence from England in 1962, particularly the desire to forget the literal, symbolic and socioeconomic violence of the colonial era" (Horst, 2008).

Portmore, also known as the "Sunshine City", is situated on the south coast of Jamaica in the Parish of St. Catherine approximately 15 miles south-west of the capital of Kingston. Divided into two regions, the plains to the north and the limestone hills of

Hellshire to the south, Portmore also comprises of mangrove and saline wetlands to the south east and alluvium areas in the centre and west, with the elevated areas of Port Henderson and Hellshire Hills rising above the gently sloping Portmore Plains.

Portmore consists of historical communities such as Old Portmore, Braeton, Hellshire and Gregory Park, with many sub-divisions being added over time in line with the continuing development causing it to be one of the largest urban areas in Jamaica and the Caribbean in respect to human relocation and settlement. Portmore has seen a consistently growing population with official records reflecting 5,100 residents in 1970; 73,400 in 1982; 97,000 (1991); and 161,700 in 2001. Latest census data (2011) place the population at 182,253 residents. (STATIN, 2012).

Having being built on a generally flat plain facing the Kingston Harbour, the Portmore construction boom of the 1960's was designed with an intricate canal system which prevents flooding, as much of the land is reclaimed swamplands.

### **Portmore: The Political Connection**

Political parties in Jamaica have a storied history. Rising out the labour unrest of the 1930's, where the marginalized rural poor predominantly made up of workers on the islands numerous sugar estates, alongside the port workers of the country's capital Kingston, agitated for better wages and working conditions. Out of this militancy, two major political parties emerged: the Peoples National Party (PNP) which has historically advocated on a platform of *democratic socialism* referring to "...the socialist political philosophy that advocates political democracy alongside a socially owned economy" (Busky, 2000) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), whose mandate upon forming was to '...take the struggle of the workers, until then confined to collective bargaining and the

advocacy of social legislation, to the field of politics where the power of the state could be won for the workers and become an instrument for the improvement of their standard of living, and the reduction of social and economic inequality...” (The History of The JLP n.d.)

In subsequent years, whilst both political parties sought to better the lot of the Jamaica people, social reform was promoted through the building of houses and communities; but this would normally follow on the lines of the political affiliation of the residents, with some of these new housing estates morphing to what has been termed “garrison” communities, defined in the Jamaican context, as “...a military stronghold based on political tradition, cultural values, beliefs, myths and socialization.” (Stone, 1986). Chevannes (1992) added to the definition of garrison communities the factor of territory seizure and territorial invasion, noting that the country’s escalating drug trade fuelled an independence from political party allegiance. Figueroa and Sives (2002) further articulated that homogeneous voting, electoral manipulation and gun violence is the reality of the garrison process in post-independence Jamaica, in addition to positing their own definition of a garrison community as one in which any individual/group that seeks to oppose, raise opposition to or organize against the locally dominant party would be in physical danger, thus making continued residence in the area extremely difficult, if not impossible.

As stated before, the building of the community of Portmore was, in essence, an attempt at relocating the urban, inner-city residents of these mainly garrison communities to a more socially uplifting locale; one that would not be defined by inner-city violence and criminality. But, despite these grand political and social ideals that sought to allocate

housing on a bi-partisan basis with no intention to keep former political-feuding communities together, the murder cycle that continually haunted urban inner-city communities has been transferred to the seemingly nirvana, “new hope” communities of Portmore. The feeding frenzy of crime and violence continues, despite the gains in the provision of adequate low-income housing solutions for the previously oppressed and dispossessed.

### **Nature of the Research Problem**

During the period 1990 to 2005, “...the municipality of Portmore, showed the highest growth [of crime] of all urban areas...” (Gray, 2007), suggesting that this specific geographical zone of the island has an inordinately high murder rate. Various studies have been conducted to determine what drives the murder rate in the island of Jamaica and most have shown a cultural behavioral crisis based on historical political divisions within the capital city and its suburbs (Moser & Holland, 1997; Harriott, 2003; Harriott & Jones, 2016).

Murder is considered the ultimate crime and there is a moral responsibility for government and citizens alike to determine solutions. Academics also have a responsibility to offer possible reasons and solutions that can only be ascertained if studies are conducted. Apart from this moral responsibility, murder also has an impact on the economic life of the country, both in cost to secure the populace and its image, considering that Jamaica, as a nation, is largely dependent on the earnings of the tourism dollar. The lack of explanation of the behavior of this particular geographical zone is the reason why this study is being undertaken; also if we can discover through research the commonalities of the victims, then solutions can be found to address this problem.

The study will therefore seek to investigate and analyze the relationship between victims of murder in the community of Portmore and their level of involvement with criminality, if any, over the period January 2015 to December 2018. The stated purpose is to show the relationship between criminal activity and the likelihood of being a murder statistic; to determine the risk assessment of citizens in Portmore not involved in crime and, most importantly, to identify if there is a specific commonality within persons who are both victims of homicide and associated with criminal activity. This will serve as important information for future criminal justice practitioners to use in their quest to prevent homicides through behavior modification.

This study will undertake:

1. An examination of the murders committed in municipality of Portmore, between January 2015 and December 2018 with an aim to determining the occurrence victim/offender overlap,
2. A comparison of murders committed in the municipality of Portmore, between January 2015 and December 2018, with a view to determining the occurrence of murders in the post-Independence settlements versus pre-Independence settlements, to further determine the success or failure of the post-Independence housing initiatives and its impact on the committal of homicides, bearing in mind that the community that is being compared to New Portmore, was informally constructed and unplanned.
3. The influence of gang activity in the municipality of Portmore and the impact their actions have had on the various communities' murder rates over the period January 2015 to December 2018.

### **Background and Significance**

Portmore is a suburb of both Kingston and Spanish Town, which are the current and former capital cities of Jamaica, respectively. The community is geographically located almost equidistant between both cities and is comparatively young, having been created in the post-colonial era of Jamaica's political and self-governing infancy beginning in 1962, with consistent development and expansion over the last 50 years. It is largely a dormitory community originally intended as a low-cost housing development of starter units regimented into the pattern of maximum returns (Voorthuis, 1997; Jaffe, 2012), with little or no industry and with the majority of its residents commuting daily, whether for employment or education. Although the community was created as a housing opportunity for the lower-middle class, 50 years later it has become a gang infested, high crime zone with an average of 100 murders per year, over the last 5 years.

The study of crime, criminality and violence in Jamaica is not a new phenomenon. Noted academics have produced seminal works (Boxill et al., 2007; Powell et al., 2007; Waller et al., 2007; Harriott et al., 2004; Harriott, 2000, 2003a; 2004; Sives, 2003; Gray, 2003) that have adequately explored the issues and reasons and offered solutions in the effort to lessen the scourge that has afflicted the country over the last 40 years. However, these studies and research have normally been conducted from a macro, national level. Few have sought to examine specific communities or townships, isolating their homicide statistics and specifically examining the dynamic of victim/offender overlap as it relates to a defined area such as Portmore. These studies have hardly sought to determine the contribution of gangs and the impact of informal squatter settlements on crime, especially murder. The creation of Portmore was meant to signify a rebirth of the middle-class. Historically, the hatred displayed by inner-city residents to others of neighboring

communities were divided on the lines of political allegiance and voting history and resulted in the loss of lives of thousands. The construction of many of these inner city communities were unplanned, shanty-type constructions devoid of social amenities; Portmore however was different. Portmore was to have modern concrete construction, infrastructure and most importantly, planned communities. These housing solutions would not be distributed or allocated on the basis of political allegiance or partisan affiliation, but rather by outright purchase or from a benefit derived from contributing to the National Housing Trust, a statutory organisation established by the government in 1976, mandated to lend money at low interest rates to contributors who wished to build, buy, repair or improve their homes.

This study addresses the gap in existing research on the victim/offender overlap through the analysis of victimology data, as it is uniquely a study on Portmore. Taking into account the nature of Portmore's genesis, the study will allow law enforcement officers, academics and civic leaders to get an opportunity to see a crime cycle that is at a different point from similar communities in Jamaica. Exposure to the current crime realities that exist in Portmore will illuminate the areas of state failure and assist in strategy development. More importantly however, is a need for Portmore to find a solution that is specific and relevant.

Portmore is young relative to Kingston and is a community that was created by persons bent on solving problems caused by the failure of state urban planners in providing housing solutions for the lower middle class. Did they fail in this endeavour? This study is necessary to determine an answer to this question. The study is conducted in real time as the murders occur with significant involvement of the police personnel

investigating the crime and the intelligence arm of the division that oversees the Portmore Municipality. The in-depth analysis of the victim will encompass the former arrest record of the victim; an intelligence analysis conducted for every murder victim; and in-depth research of association (if any) the victims may have with the criminal underworld, to include the following categories:

- a) Involved in violent criminal activity themselves*
- b) Being a gang member*
- c) Being involved with gang members by association – whether socially or intimately*
- d) Being related by family*
- e) Being formerly arrested for violent crime or gang*

This research will also address the categorization of these murders in an effort to determine the likelihood of being a victim of murder during a robbery, domestic violence or spontaneous erratic behavior, such as road rage.

Although one would say that persons from inner city communities would not forget the inbred hatred of persons from the opposing community, it must be understood that they were not resettled in political enclaves. There was a random mix of citizens migrating in relatively even numbers over the last fifty years. Few, if any, of the previous research or studies conducted cite political divisions as being the reason for the carnage in Portmore, and this makes this particular group of future victims to be worthy of study, versus any other group of homicide victims in Jamaica, attesting to their uniqueness.

To properly understand the reason why it is so important to probe and research the victims of homicide in Portmore, one needs to first understand certain parameters of its



populace where the vast majority live in decently constructed houses which has the ability to be policed, based on access and control. The homes are well within the life cycle of a building and great care has been taken to plan these communities with green areas and schools. This is contrary to what exists in the inner-city areas within Kingston and Spanish Town which generally has old buildings, shanty towns and tenement yards and is often characterized by inadequate sanitary conveniences and urban blight.

Portmore was intended to be the newly independent nation's first planned city, unlike the other existing cities of Kingston and Montego Bay that were created and constructed by the British Colonial authorities with little or no plans for the urban poor. During the period of the creation and development of the major cities, the poor was largely peasantry and predominantly rural. These inner cities were created without a plan and as a result led to mass squatting or the adjustments of formerly commercial buildings into overcrowded, tenement housing.

Portmore, the "Sunshine City" of the future, was intended to end the characteristics associated with Kingston by creating a suburb that did not replicate the errors of the colonial masters. What makes this more interesting and the study more necessary is that the architects of Portmore succeeded to a large degree in accomplishing most of their aims. The construction has stood the test of time; the communities are accessible and easy to police; and the social infrastructure has performed with many of its schools being favorably compared with the best in the country. Crime, to a greater degree, is controlled and "garrison" communities (communities that have strong political allegiance to one party that are largely impossible to effectively police due to gang control), do not exist.

Murder, however, remains the one serious crime that continues at rates that mirrors inner city communities.

The fundamental questions that need to be discussed and analysed are: Did we fail at our only attempt in creating a “Sunshine City”? If we have blamed a spiraling national murder rate on the characteristics of inner city environments, why does it still exist at such an alarming rate in the newly created solution to inner city housing? Could it be that the blame we have ascribed to our colonial architects is misdirected?

What is the future policing strategy for this epidemic that impacts primarily males between the ages of 18 and 35? How do we stop this epidemic from spreading to younger groupings of males or start to impact females in the same age group?

These questions and the question as to why current policing strategies have failed to bring the murder rate back to pre-2003 levels can begin to be answered by a study of its victims rather than a study of the perpetrators, which has already been done. If there is a behavioral problem or practice that is evident in the conduct of the victims of murder over the years 2015 to 2018, then criminal justice practitioners can begin making changes in the way we structure our policing strategies and the architects of social change could put into effect the modifications required to arrest this trend of conduct that causes young men in Portmore to be murdered, a trend that is evidently triggered by social conditions.

The expressed aim of this study is to foster policy change and policing strategies. The current practices in the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and in particular the St. Catherine South Police Division (SCSPD) does not take into account:

1. *The extraordinarily high rate of victim overlap.*
2. *The contribution of gang existence to murder.*

3. *The informal communities and their contribution to crime.*
4. *The reporting format for crime reporting and its impact on community reputation and morale, and*
5. *Risk assessment.*

The study of the rate of victim/offender overlap will allow for law enforcement to allocate resources differently, as it will guide them to likely motive and thus reducing likely reprisals; areas that are often overlooked. This study brings all three sets of data together and highlights that it is almost always a criminal encounter that causes the murder and one or more subsequent to it, bearing in mind that murders of innocent citizens rarely result in retaliation, but almost always occur in gang homicides.

The study of the contribution of gangs to the violence in this community, with little or no history of political commitment, will demonstrate that gangs are the feeder system to the homicide rate and hopefully will result in the modification of existing laws, and the formulation of new ones to effectively combat and counter the scourge.

Macro policy determines micro behavior, and if gangs are attacked by the leaders of the country (and indeed the municipal leaders of Portmore) then it will shift the thought process and cause a ripple effect that impacts the culture that is feeding gangs.

By highlighting the informal community and its contribution to the homicide rate, this study hopes to motivate a change in social improvement and crime fighting policies that are specific to this type of environment, rather than the generic approach that is applied irrespective to the origin of the community and its lack of infrastructure.

It is the hope that there will be a change in the reporting format that breaks the community down specifically in relation to where the homicide is committed and also

where the suspects are from. I believe that the micro analysis will make the wider police environment and even the public far more knowledgeable than they are currently.

There is also that element that cannot be ignored: the former communities in Portmore that existed prior to the 1962 experiment. There were several informal settlements that did not get the benefit of the repopulation or reconstruction of housing, and these communities continue to exist in their pre-Independence squalor.

These communities have been deemed virtual political “garrisons” and make up a relatively small percentage of the total population of Portmore. This being said, it is important to see how this percentage of the Portmore population correlates to their contribution to annual homicide statistics. This is important as this plays its own part in measuring the success (or failure) of the transformation, by comparing the contribution of the pre-Independence communities to those that are of post-Independence.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1. What is the likelihood of persons with criminal behavior or association in Portmore, Jamaica, becoming victims of homicide?

RQ2. What is the relationship between victims of homicide and their level of involvement in crime?

RQ3. What proportions of murders in Portmore, Jamaica are committed in communities built during the 1965-1990 housing boom, in relation to those built prior?

RQ4. How does the occurrence of victim/offender overlap and the homicide rate compare with the neighboring community of Central Village, which was built in the

1970's, totally informal and absolutely unplanned with the primary intention being group transfer of persons with common political affiliations.

### **Limitations of the Research/Study**

The focus of this study is on homicide victims and is therefore patently different from research on other victims and causes of crime and criminal behavior as the ability to interview, garner feedback and opinions from victims would be an impossibility.

This study will therefore rely on two formalized law enforcement systems that currently perform their own investigation and come to conclusions.

The Division Intelligence Unit (DIU) focuses on intelligence gathering whilst the Criminal Investigative Branch (CIB) focuses on evidence collection thus allowing the combining of the data gathered to result in a very effective classification tool.

Whilst there could be further information gleaned from victims surviving family members, the possibility of misinformation and misdirection is likely and could impact the validity of the study.

Another barrier is the size of the study group, as the study has taken into consideration all the victims of murder for 2015 through to the end of 2018. In not taking a sample, this amounted to a study of over 200 victims of homicide in Portmore and a further 100 in Central Village and Old Harbour. This proved to pose some challenges, as the type of research to ascertain what type of connection every victim had to criminality, is significant. This barrier was ameliorated by using available police data and the fact that research was conducted in a short period of time after the murder had been committed, when people were generally more cooperative in providing information to the police, or anyone who could assist them in the pursuit of justice for their loved ones.

## Conceptualization of Key Terms

**Garrison Communities:** in the context of this study, a garrison community is defined “...a military stronghold based on political tradition, cultural values, beliefs, myths and socialization...” (Stone, 1986), coined during the period in Jamaican political history that saw a (then) unprecedented number of murders attributed to violence between the two major political parties. Stone noted that these garrisons were characterized by being housing projects set up by the ruling party and peopled with supporters; the chasing out all political opposition at gunpoint allowing for the community to achieve political homogeneity within, whilst the entry and exit to the community are monitored by top ranking gang leaders. The garrisons are also maintained by party personnel and a framework of violence, the allocation of scarce benefits and patronage.

**Informal Settlements/Communities:** the United Nations (1997) has defined informal settlements/communities as:

1. areas where groups of housing units have been constructed on land that the occupants have no legal claim to, or occupy illegally;
2. unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations (unauthorized housing).

UN Habitat, in their country profile publication (Profile C, 2007) referred specifically to Jamaica and informal settlements/communities and the challenges it posed to local policing by stating:

*“There are two developments on the social agenda of concern to the Jamaica Constabulary Force: the spread of informal settlements and usurpation of power by individuals referred to as “Area Dons” in certain communities.”*

Informal settlements have various definitions, but in the context of the Jamaica experience, here the term refers to land, infrastructure and shelter development, and land invasions that occur outside the land-use planning process and other government rules (Ferguson, 1996), giving credence to the fact that conditions within the informal settlements of Portmore are common to many informal communities with limited basic services and infrastructure. Informal settlements, which are found around the island, are characterized by the act of “squatting”, which is the illegal or unauthorized occupation of land or housing. A squatter or informal settlement is thus a residential area which has developed without legal claims to the land and or permission from the concerned authorities to build (Ministry of Housing, 2008).

**Victim/Offender Overlap:** The victim–offender overlap can be defined as the link between victimization and the perpetration of crime and delinquency (Reingle, 2014). The theory can be further conceptualized as “...a victim who is an offender and vice versa as, generally, involvement in a criminal event or activity increases the chances of victimization and offending...” (Daigle & Muftic, 2016).

Coming out of extensive research, albeit mainly from a North American and Western Europe perspective, studies have consistently identified three main characteristics that are attributable to the victim/offender overlap phenomenon, being: “...victims and offenders share a similar demographic profile; victims and offenders are

often one in the same; [and] similar processes seem to produce offending and victimization...’’ (Piquero, MacDonald, Dobrin, Daigle & Cullen, 2005).



## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives and Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

A myriad of researchers have acknowledged a palpable and significant relationship between the victims of, and the offenders who, commit crime. The observation gleaned from over a century of descriptive, correlational and longitudinal studies has led to the questioning of “why” the victims of crime are, more often than not, offenders themselves. Scholars have not always agreed on why some victims are at risk for becoming offenders, as the issue is complex and varies by individual demographics, victimization types, and crimes committed (DeLong & Reichert, 2019).

The relationship between victimization and offending, also referred to as the victim-offender overlap, is widely documented and extensively assessed (Fagan, Piper & Cheng, 1987; Gottfredson, 1984); Farrell & Zimmerman, 2018; Jensen & Brownfield, 1986). Research has progressed to the point of analysis where the reasons or factors for this phenomenon has fueled debate and enacted policy change in crime prevention, criminal justice reform and offender rehabilitation efforts.

Criminal justice policies have historically tended to contrast victims with offenders, but they are often the same people (Lauritsen & Laub, 2007). There are reasons why victims become offenders or why offenders eventually become a victim of the life style they perpetuate, but it is not the intention of this research to explain the motivations for these. Rather, it aims to indicate the occurrence of this phenomenon and the analysis of what percentage of homicide victims are actually classified as offenders, based on criminal conduct displayed during their lifetime.

Karmen (2012) defines victimology as "... the study of victimization, including the psychological effects on victims, relationships between victims and offenders, the interactions between victims and the criminal justice system (that is the police, courts and correctional officials) and the connections between victims and other social groups and institutions, such as the media, businesses, and social movements..." This definition is essential to the study of the victim-offender overlap, as some elements are intricately entwined in establishing the overarching and recurring themes that commonly permeate such studies. With the term "victim-offender overlap" being coined by Wolfgang (1958), subsequent studies and discourse expounding various theories surrounding the determination and classification of offenders and victims have been posited.

Since Wolfgang's initial study, the majority of subsequent research on victim/offender overlap has concentrated on the investigation of the issue from a Western perspective with not only notable studies originating from North America, but also Britain (Gottfredson, 1984; Mawby, 1979; Mayhew & Elliott, 1990; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1990; Sparks, Glen, & Dodd, 1977), and Western Europe (Bjarnason, Sigurdardotir, & Thorlindson, 1999; Ku'hlhorn, 1990; Van Dijk & Steinmetz, 1983; Wittebrood & Nieuwberta, 1999).

Despite the Western-centric abundance of research, there does exist some studies that have examined the phenomenon by utilising samples from outside of North America and Western Europe. Researchers have investigated and analysed the origin, cause and effects of victim/offender overlap from diverse countries such as Columbia (Klevens, Duque, & Ramirez, 2002), Puerto Rico (Maldonado-Molina, Piquero, Jennings, Bird, & Canino, 2009), and South Korea (Jennings, Park, Tomisich, Gover, & Akers, 2011),

The aforementioned studies have established and confirmed that there exists a considerable amount of overlap between victimization and offending in a number of researched areas. More recently, scholars have delved into specific facets of crime and deviant behavior and their relationship with victim/offender overlap through published studies focussing on juvenile delinquency (Maldonado-Molina et al., 2009, 2010), property crime (Klebens et al., 2002), dating violence (Jennings et al., 2011), interpersonal violence (Klebens et al., 2002), and sexual assault (Klebens et al., 2002).

One of the main tenets of academic research is the concept of its transferability, referring to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or, "...the extent to which the measured effectiveness of an applicable intervention could be achieved in another setting" (Cambon, Minary, Ridde, & Alla, 2012).

The research conducted in this paper also seeks to ascertain if the findings of the study are similar and relevant across all jurisdictions by determining the level of criminal activity of victims of homicide in the community of Portmore, and the investigation through the attempt to question the relationship and victim-offender overlap that may exist.

The geographic space that is referred to as Portmore is in actuality an agglomeration of more than sixty distinct localities with a combined estimated population of 182,000 residents (Schoburgh, 2010). Portmore is unique: it was also created with the additional intention to remove the normal traditional triggers that were believed to fuel high rates of homicide in other Jamaican inner-city communities, especially that which existed in the capital Kingston's slums. There was a genuine effort to create mass housing

to alleviate the overcrowding that had previously existed in the capital city by building this suburb devoid of the history of political divide that dominated the culture of Kingston's inner-city communities punctuated with antiquated social infrastructure and unplanned communities. Portmore was supposed to be different. With construction beginning post-Independence (1962), the effort was made not to distribute homes along political lines which was contrary to the efforts of earlier politicians who actively aimed to keep like-minded communities together to create "garrisons" in order to ensure favourable voting blocs. The "new hope", "Sunshine City" was created, affording the residents modern infrastructure, free of the shanty, chattel type housing that permeated the informal communities that was their way of life in the inner-city of Kingston.

Since its creation, Portmore has seen a significant rise in its homicide rate, year on year, culminating in 103 murders in 2017 when compared to 94 in 2016 and a slight recovery in 2018 to 96 (Jamaica Gleaner, June 2017). With the question being: is there a relationship between criminal activity and being a victim of homicide in the community of Portmore between the years of 2015-2018?, the hypothesis will state that individuals who are the victims of homicide in Portmore are to a large degree involved in criminal activity at various levels. The theory is that victims and perpetrators of crime are often switching roles to victims becoming perpetrators and perpetrators becoming victims: the victim-offender overlap. Victimologists have, since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, acknowledged a relationship between victims and offenders, with the study of this phenomenon becoming one of the most empirically supported and established findings in the field of criminology. Schafer (1968) waxed poetic and succinctly summarised the

phenomenon: "...attack was the defense against attack, and the state of war between criminal and his victim made the sufferer a doer and converted criminals to victims."

Unlike other studies of victim/offender overlap, this study posits the hypothesis that a significant majority of homicides in Portmore are in fact criminals killing criminals and these homicides occur because of hard core gang activity.

As alluded to before, research that has been conducted over the preceding century (and more so in the last 20 years) has identified an overlap of experiences and themes that run as a common thread through victims/offenders that have been analysed. Individual factors (age, gender, issues of self-control and genetic predisposition); situational factors (living in dangerous communities, poor familial relationships, peer pressure) were identified, cementing the hypothesis that individual personalities and the exposure to criminal environments results in a greater risk of an individual being a victim of crime, and a perpetrator.

In order to essentially understand the drivers of criminal activity in Portmore community and in an effort to add to the ongoing discussions about how the commonality of the victim-offender overlap mirrors the existing data and studies conducted internationally, a comprehensive review of existing literature is essential in order to highlight the common themes of how lifestyles, behavior, environment, homogeneity, classification, individual and situational characteristics dictate the likelihood of being a statistic.

Most victims of crime do not become offenders, but most offenders have been victims (Jennings, Piquero, & Reingle, 2012), and while no single or unified theory exists to fully explain the phenomenon, one of the strongest empirical associations in

criminological literature is between offending and victimization (Berg & Felson, 2018). This evolution and rationale can be traced through several theoretical concepts and works delivered by noted scholars in the field, specifically in the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the criminological literature presents substantial evidence that victims and offenders in violent crimes share demographic characteristics, engage in similar lifestyles and activities, and reside in socially disorganized neighborhoods (Daday, Broidy, Crandall, & Sklar, 2005)

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

#### **Individual Trait and Population Heterogeneity Theory**

In criminological studies, the individual trait theory of criminology proffers the view that certain personality traits make people more likely to become criminals and that these traits are often influenced by both nature (biological and genetic factors), and nurture (environmental factors). Listed amongst these individual traits that researchers opine are influencers of offending and victimization are impulsivity and low self control (Finkelhor & Asdigian, 1996; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Jensen & Brownfield, 1986; Wilson & Herstein, 1985).

Further, scholars have identified that other contributing factors to the victim/offender overlap debate include gender, race, physical stature/appearance and antisocial behaviors (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997; Meithe & Meier, 1994; Lauristen & Quinet, 1995; Gottfredson, 1984); with the last factor, antisocial behavior (encompassing the propensity to violence and criminal involvement) being quite pertinent and relevant to this study.

Recent research has sought to tie both the individual trait factors and population heterogeneity factors together. Ousey (2011) used longitudinal data gathered on middle and high school students. The study examined competing arguments regarding the relationship between victimization and offending embedded within the “dynamic causal” and “population heterogeneity” perspectives (Ousey et al., 2011). Initially using a model that estimated the longitudinal relationship between victimization and offending without accounting for the influence of time stable heterogeneity, the researchers then reconsidered the victimization/offending relationship after the sources of heterogeneity were controlled and concluded that “... the results were in line with prior research and indicated a positive link between victimization and offending...” with the results being “... most consistent with the notion that the oft-reported victimization/offending relationship link is driven by a combination of casual and population heterogeneity factors.” (Ousey et al., 2011). Prior to Ousey’s work, other studies also revealed that some of the same individual level factors also contributed to a victim’s propensity to offend (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Schreck et al., 2002)

### **Neighbourhood Theory**

Anderson (1999) provides valuable insights for understanding the nature of violence, explaining that violence is believed necessary to gain respect due to limited financial means in disadvantaged, inner-city communities. In this context, the gaining of respect is just one of the neighbourhood level mechanisms that exist to influence rather significantly the victim/offender overlap and may vary according to the actual neighbourhood, family friends, associates and personal interaction (Daigle, 2012)

Scholars have long asked the question of whether: does delinquency and criminality result from neighbourhood factors or from a differential selection of families to specific neighbourhoods? In answer to this provocative question (Junger-Tas, Steketee, & Jonkman, 2012) recount a housing experiment, which involved moving families from inner-city high poverty areas to low poverty areas (Goering & Feins, 2003). Using a randomized assignment with two control groups, the authors compared the outcomes of families who moved with those who would have done so, had it been offered to them. Families who moved to low poverty areas witnessed an improvement of their sons' physical and mental health, well-being, safety and problem behavior.

This study cements the theory that not only does a person's lifestyle play a significant factor in their exposure to the risk of becoming a victim/offender statistic, but where a person lives and spends time also puts that person at risk of victimization. "Hot spots" or areas known as being crime-prone create opportunities for victimization to occur and enhance the chances of an individual experiencing victimization (Daigle, 2012)

The role of gangs is a recurring theme in the study of the victim-offender overlap and its contribution to the level of crime that is experienced in a geographical area. Many Jamaican gangs saw their genesis in an era of political turmoil, causing disenfranchised youth to take up arms and aligning themselves with the islands two main political parties (Grant, Gibson & Edward, 2010), to fight for scarce benefits and resources. These politically motivated gangs were led by "dons" who "acted as enforcers of political will...in exchange, the political parties allowed these enforcers to operate with impunity...becoming the rule of law" (Wilks, Morris, Walker, Pedecini & Qu, 2007). Weak and absent state authority contributed to the high levels of homicide and "garrison"



communities are viewed as states within the state (Morris & Graycar, 2011). Horst (2008) contributes to the discourse by establishing a background for the deterioration of once proud communities in Portmore that existed shortly after Independence, and its descent into “freelance violence” perpetuated by gangs who were once aligned to political parties. Jackson (2016) explored the risk factors that exist in gangs, both in Jamaica and the United States, highlighting that neighbourhood conditions, broken homes and negative behaviors contributed to the forming and joining of gangs where, in comparison to non-gang members, individuals were more likely to be a homicide participant or victim.

Berg, Stewart, Shreck & Simons (2012) in their study on neighbourhood street culture found that the victim-offender overlap was significantly more predominant in neighbourhoods where gangs, and violence perpetuated by them, was driven by offenders that had themselves be victimized, mirroring research conducted by Berg & Loeber (2011) in Pittsburgh where results indicated that the relationship between victimization and offending was more pronounced in disadvantaged communities.

Similarly, Pyrooz, Moule and Decker (2013) investigated the consequences of gang membership and victim-offender overlap using data gathered from over 600 interviewees from 5 cities, and found that gang members were twice more likely to fall into the overlapping category of victims of violence and violent offenders.

The environment where the victim-offender overlap exists is not limited to the areas that are traditionally viewed as breeding-grounds of high crime and extreme violent behavior (inner-city United States, Jamaican garrisons) but empirical studies have also been conducted in countries that are viewed as more genteel. Aaltonen (2016) assessed whether the same hypotheses existed in Finland, through a 7 year study that concluded

that the risk posed by prior offenders was disproportionately targeted toward criminally active individuals; Heber (2013) in Sweden identified the group of victim-offenders, describing them as “pitiful things”; and Klevens et al (2002) in Bogata, Colombia found that a third of the population of that city (using data from a cross sectional survey among a random sample size of 3000) had been both a victim and perpetrator of violence.

### **Routine Activities and Lifestyle Theory**

The most common theoretical framework to account for the victim-offender overlap is the routine activities/lifestyle perspective (Cohen and Felson 1979; Hindelang et al. 1978). The underlying idea is that risky lifestyles (Hindelang et al. 1978) and routine activities (Cohen and Felson 1979) bring potential victims into contact with motivated offenders and expose them to situations conducive to victimization. In addition, Osgood et al. (1996) found that unstructured socializing with (deviant) peers in the absence of authority figures also predicts participation in offending. Other studies report similar findings (Anderson and Hughes 2009; Bernasco et al. 2013; Bernburg and Thorlindsson 2001; Hay and Forrest 2008; Maimon and Browning 2010). Substance use and abuse , such as illicit drugs and excessive alcohol consumption, are also characteristic of risky lifestyles, and scholars have identified these factors and the their influence on both victimization (Felson and Burchfield 2004; Gover 2004; Lauritsen et al. 1992; Malik et al. 1997; Vogel and Himelein 1995) and offending (Elliott et al. 1985, 1989; Zhang et al. 1997).

Empirical evidence seeks to demonstrate and substantiate the theory that victims are often themselves offenders and in the case of homicide the overlap of crime may manifest itself into criminal homicide. Reingle (2014) supports this theory by stating that

the misconception that persons are either offenders or victims has perpetuated despite the body of evidence that individuals are both victims and offenders. Reingle's study showed that 50% of homicide victims had a prior arrest and only 51% of perpetrators had not been victims themselves. The theory is well supported by the literature chosen to be examined and has the benefit of actual studies.

In many instances, the lifestyle of homicide victims is placed under scrutiny in the period following their demise. It is theorized that the lifestyle of the victim is that which often results in them being victimized. By living a lifestyle in keeping with the typology of persons who commit crimes, they eventually end up being both victim and perpetrator, being driven to large degree to their lifestyle choice. Pizarro, Zgoba and Jennings (2011) sought to validate this and found that a criminal lifestyle was indeed a very common factor among both offenders and victims. The study Pizarro et al (2011) conducted over the ten year period of 1997 through to 2007 in Newark, New Jersey, sought to answer the questions on the lifestyle exhibited and the different types of homicide "actor" (victim/perpetrator), through the analysis of over five hundred incidents of homicide.

On a similar note, Entorf (2013) used the demographic similarities of both the victim and the offender and thrust them into close proximity with each other due to the common factor of their lifestyles. Entorf further says that the link with lifestyle actually influences victimization. The analysis conducted by Pizarro further supports this by indicating that of 513 victims examined, 75% demonstrated criminal activity; 57% had a history of drug offences and 47% of victims had actual prior arrest records.

This study somewhat mirrored one initiated by Broidy, Daday, Crandall, Sklar and Jost (2006) where a theoretical explanation of victim-offender lifestyle and routine was

used to predict significant overlap; their findings indicated that variations in lifestyle, especially where it related to work and leisure, influenced a victims exposure to risk. The Broidy *et al* study, conducted over the six year period of 1996-2001, analyzed the data collected from over three hundred homicide incidents (310) with a breakdown of 377 offenders and 321 victims and concluded that many victims overlapped with offender populations.

In more recent studies, the examination of the lifestyles of victims and offenders has propagated the theory of “routine activity”: the more one is exposed to criminal behavior in their everyday lifestyle, the higher the likelihood that a person will commit criminal activity (Pratt & Piquero, 2016; Turanovic & Pratt, 2012 & 2015; Turanovic, Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2012; Taylor, Freng, Esbensen & Peterson, 2008).

Mustaine *et al* examined a sample of college students involved in criminal assault cases and found that the likelihood of being both a victim and offender was explained by members of both groups participation in other illegal behaviors. Over the course of numerous studies, Turanovic *et al* sought to explain the causal effect of routine activity and risky lifestyles (substance abuse, drug dealing) and how they influenced becoming a victim.

On a similar note, the study by Taylor et al sought to answer the question: is gang member’s involvement in delinquent lifestyles and routine activities a viable explanation for their increased risk of serious violent victimization? Through a study of over 5000 eighth-grade public school students from 42 schools in 11 states, the researchers highlighted the importance that factors such as delinquent activities and gang membership enhanced the likelihood of being a statistic of violence.

Viewing the issue from a different perspective, Schreck, Stewart and Osgood (2008) go a step further by stating that although offenders and victims often carry the same characteristics which resulted in them exhibiting the same behaviors, their analysis in fact examined and posited the view that non-criminal victims tended to avoid risky activities whereas criminal victims are attracted to negative behavior.

### **Social Control Theory Perspective**

Social control theory proposes that an individual's relationships, commitments, values, norms, and beliefs – in essence, a person's morals - encourage them not to break the law. Thus, if these moral codes are internalized and individuals are tied into and have a stake in their wider community, they will voluntarily limit their propensity to commit deviant and delinquent acts. Thorlindsson & Bernburg (2004) further simplify this definition by stating "... social groups have structural properties where norms values and ongoing social relationships place constraints on the individual."

Hirschi (1969) posited that criminality is a possibility for all individuals within society, avoided only by those who seek to maintain familial and social bonds. Hirschi further expounded on this theory by postulating that these bonds are based on *attachment* (to those both within and outside of the family, including friends, teachers, and co-workers); *commitment* (to activities in which an individual has invested time and energy, such as educational or career goals); *involvement* (in activities that serve to both further bond an individual to others and leave limited time to become involved in deviant activities); and *belief* (in wider social values). Siegel and McCormick (2006) further endorsed this view by stating "...these four aspects of social control are thought to interact to insulate an individual from criminal involvement."

In contrast, Jennings, Higgins, Tewksbury, Gover & Piquero (2010) provide a different view that there are theoretical reasons to expect that social bonds may also act as barriers for victimization as well. Individuals who have strong bonds toward their parents, school, peers, and the like are likely to not be involved in crime and delinquency out of a general concern that their participation in crime and delinquency would adversely affect the quality of their social bonds. In addition, their criminal and delinquent involvement may also reduce or eliminate any potential benefits that are afforded to them due to their living a lifestyle grounded in conformity (Jennings et al, 2010).

### **Social Learning and Differential Association**

Social learning theory is a general theory of crime and criminality and has been used in research to explain a diverse array of criminal behaviors and is centred around the idea that "...the same learning process in a context of social structure, interaction, and situation produces both conforming and deviant behavior" (Akers and Sellers, 2004). Akers (1998), the leading proponent of this theory, summarizes:

"The probability that persons will engage in criminal and deviant behavior is increased and the probability of their conforming to the norm is decreased when they differentially associate with others who commit criminal behavior and espouse definitions favorable to it, are relatively more exposed in-person or symbolically to salient criminal/deviant models, define it as desirable or justified in a situation discriminative for the behavior, and have received in the past and anticipate in the current or future situation relatively greater reward than punishment for the behavior."

Megargee (1982) posits the view that social learning theories, when applied to the victim/offender overlap phenomenon, has been used by scholars to examine and explain intergenerational patterns (such as when a victim experiences violence) which could lead to the victim learning violent and aggressive behavior. Recent studies have tested social learning theory as an explanation for victimization (Fox, Nobles, & Akers, 2011), and therefore also offending, where the authors examined the extent to which components of social learning theory (definitions, differential reinforcement, and differential association/modeling) predict stalking victimization and perpetration, using survey data from a large sample of college students.

### **Classification and Characteristics**

Further discourse has been extended on the victim-offender topic but a review of the literature shows a paucity of discussion on the classification of victims and offenders. Loftin, Kindley, Norris and Wiersema (1987) identified this gap whilst critiquing the lack of standardization, multidimensionality and vagueness of the existing classification. Loftin *et al* introduced an attribute approach (neighbours, lovers, friends and associates, family and strangers) to the classification of victim-offender relationships that was able to enhance clarity and allow for the development of typologies of other social statuses. Cao, Hou and Huang (2007) applied similar research in Taiwan to conclude that their analysis in the portioning of homicides was fruitful in revealing otherwise obscured relationships.

Berg and Felson (2016) more recently attempted to delineate the gaps in existing research by exploring the topic of interpersonal violence and introducing a classification of dispute-related violence to the victim-offender overlap typology. Barnes and Beaver

(2012) go even further by testing the hypothesis that victims and offenders share a genetic etiology through the sampling of sibling pairs.

Classifying victims and offenders with having low self-control has been the focus of several contemporary studies. Jennings, Higgins, Tewksbury, Grover and Piquero (2010) posit that low self-control is one of the risk factors that saliently distinguish victim-offender tendencies; Flexon, Meldrum and Piquero (2015) continued this line of research and concurred that low self-control is positively related to both victimization and offending.

### **Conclusion**

Over the last fifty years, and more specifically in the last decade and a half, researchers have reinforced the acknowledgement of the relationship between victims and offenders, where many victims were found to be offenders, and offenders had experienced some form of violence inflicted upon them. Latter studies have more focused on the “why” and this has formed the body of opinion that personalities (risky behavior, gang affiliation) and environments (neighbourhoods, living conditions) put persons at risk of both committing a crime and becoming the victim of one, with this evidence being consistent across historical, cultural and international boundaries.

With the community of Portmore transitioning into a geographical area that is worthy of research into the victim-offender phenomenon from a Jamaican perspective, the proposed study will seek to analyze the “why” of the murders in Portmore, with the hope of establishing robust prevention and intervention programs that will isolate offenders, before they become victims.



## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

As stated in the previous chapters, the aim of the proposed research is the study of victims of homicide in the municipality of Portmore, St. Catherine and the determination to what extent, if any, their history or connection to criminal behavior contributed to them being a victim. More formally, it aims to address and answer the research questions previously posited: 1) What is the likelihood of persons with criminal conduct and association in Portmore, Jamaica, becoming victims of homicide? ; 2) What is the relationship between victims of homicide and their level of involvement in crime? and 3) What proportion of murders in Portmore, Jamaica are committed in communities built during the 1962-1990 housing boom, in relation to those built prior?

To address these questions, this research will adopt a historical design using a qualitative approach. Simply defined, a qualitative research approach is concerned with establishing answers to the why and how of a phenomenon in question. This type of research "refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things" and not to their "counts or measures". This research answers why and how a certain phenomenon may occur rather than how often (Lune & Berg, 2016). An important aspect of the research is the classification of the lifestyles of the victims and this will be determined by police reports generated post-mortem, with an aim to determining the amount relative to the research questions as it looks towards establishing percentages of the victims that would fit the category of the “criminally connected”: whether they are criminals themselves or are associated to persons of deviant activity. The study is on Portmore, not on Jamaica and does not hope to apply solutions to

the countrys national problem of crime; although it may provide an insight on triggers that may have been overlooked or underestimated. Portmore is unique in the Jamaican scenario as the community was created to be different than the low-income housing developments that preceded it. As it relates to homicides, the Portmore plan has failed and this study is to determine: Why did it?

To properly appreciate the relative failure of the Portmore plan as it relates to crime trends, it is important to understand the plan itself. The subsequent failures of governments prior to Independence to provide housing solutions that took into account the need to accommodate basic infrastructure such as water, electricity, roads and professionally constructed structures had caused some sections of society to live in sub-human conditions generationally and as such contributing to generational poverty. This poverty eventually morphed into crime and what occurred was shanty-type developments and subsequent behaviors affiliated to sub-human existence. Political participation and the inclusion in the democratic process for the majority of Jamaica's population, brought about by the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage in 1952, empowered the poor as they now had the possibility of selecting the government. Although this should have resulted in the introduction of resources to the communities in which they resided, it rather brought about a polarization of these communities, dividing one against the other on political lines. This was closely followed by the development of political gangs which contributed to the violence that has started to become the identifying element of some communities. Violence led to feuding and permanent lines of demarcation were drawn between communities that had formerly coexisted. The Portmore "new hope" communities were to put an end to all of that: the housing was modern concrete

structures with piped water and electricity, with paved roads and the inhabitants were no longer selected on political grounds. This brought about the end of former community feuds.

### **Participants**

According to Castillo (2009), a research population is known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait. The uniqueness of this study is that it will consider the entire population of victims: the group will be analyzed in its totality and as such the subjects of the study will be drawn from the entire population of homicide victims in Portmore over the period 2015 to 2018. The exact number of persons who have been victims of homicide, based on numerical data gathered, is 381. The demographics of the victims have been found to be primarily males between the ages of 18-35, predominantly of black (African) ethnicity, and from poor and low-income households. Although women are not often involved in gang activity, they are victims of homicide sometimes due to their association with gangs and persons who are involved in criminal activities. This occurs in circumstances where family members are involved in gangs and weaker and more accessible members of that family become victims due to reprisals.

### **Instruments**

The primary instruments to collect the data are three separate reports generated by the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) whenever a homicide occurs, and used by the St. Catherine South Police Division in which Portmore is situated:

1) Victimology Report – this report is primarily a demographic report on the homicide victim which includes investigators analysis of the conduct of the victim in that period prior to the death. It is expected that investigations have been conducted that would have determined any conduct that would be considered criminal behavior, domestic conflict or exposure to high risk due to mitigating factors (example: being a witness in a case under investigation or in the courts, being known to carry large sums of money or valuables or any other factor that would have made the victim vulnerable).

2) Criminal Investigative Branch (CIB) Report – this report is generated by the Division's CIB team and sent to Area 5 Crime (Area 5 Crime is the overseeing body for the division). This report is an official document and subject to court subpoena. It is more fact driven and relates to the crime details but still has a victim analysis affixed.

3) Intelligence Report – this report is prepared by the Divisional Investigation Unit (previously known as a Special Branch Report adopted from the British Police) and contains intelligence data that is not subject to the same type of evidential scrutiny as the previous mentioned reports. It is largely what has been picked up by the intelligence unit through covert operatives on the background of the murder, to include victims' profiles and associations.

The psychometric characteristics (the reliability and validity of the data gathering instruments: reliability refers to the consistency, while validity refers to the accuracy), are tested through the process of triangulation. Triangulation is a technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Patton (2001, p. 247) champions the use of

the method as “...triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches”. The validity and reliability of the primary reports noted are tested at a weekly tasking meeting convened at the St. Catherine South Police divisional headquarters, where discussions are had to determine their veracity.

### **Procedures**

As noted before, the research design will be based on a qualitative research design. The research design refers to the overall strategy that [is chosen] to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring the researcher will effectively address the research problem (DeVaus, 2001). The purpose of a historical research design is to collect, verify, and synthesize evidence from the past to establish facts that defend or refute a hypothesis. It uses secondary sources and a variety of primary documentary evidence, such as, diaries, official records, reports and archives (Labaree, 2009). This study design is best considered when the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; the behavior of those studied cannot be manipulated; and consideration is given to the relevance of the phenomenon and its contextual conditions (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

For the study, the primary data was drawn from the pre-existing victimology reports of all homicide victims over a four year period (January 2015 to December 2018), in the municipality of Portmore. Data generation, collection and preparation were carried out by the principal investigator, the author of this paper, primarily utilizing reports from the JCF. The principal investigators access was facilitated given that he is an accredited criminologist and police officer. The study was approached from a constructivist

paradigm, making every effort to withhold judgement in an effort to understand how the phenomenon affects the expected findings.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis commenced upon the receipt of the JCF reports with in-depth analysis undertaken to identify patterns and themes in the data seeking to ascertain any association the victims may have with the criminal underworld. A list of codes was then developed based on the reports and new codes were added as further information emerged from the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) described analysis as comprising of three components: namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification, hence summaries were produced concerning the contents of each report and data reduction summary sheets utilized to isolate responses specifically to the research question. Questions on each sheet included: was the victim involved in violent criminal activity themselves? Was the victim a known gang member? Was the victim involved with gang members by association – whether socially or intimately? The issue of convictions and charges are also included among the questions with a breakdown to divide violent offenses from non-violent and crimes that may not be violent in the outset (fraud, scamming) but can lead to violence or can serve as a financing tool for gangs. Consideration was given to rates of recidivism of victims with multiple convictions being categorized as significantly active in criminal activities prior to death. The question of being charged for violent crime but not yet convicted was still counted as a person involved in criminal activity. There was however, considerations given to persons who had been charged and acquitted. Questions were structured to make the distinction between persons charged on only occasion versus that had multiple charges.

The most useful aspect of the study will be the interview segment where the chiefs of both the Divisional Investigation Unit (DIU) and the Criminal Investigation Unit (CIU) will discuss with the researcher the categorization of the victims, as per the intelligence reports. These questions will fine tune the data into a more useful form, as they would be required to categorize the victim in one of several categories to determine the level of criminal association or indeed if there is none at all.

### **Database Use**

There has been some discussion as to the intended use of database from which the information on the victims has been gleaned. The Crime and Intelligence Management System (CIM) utilized by the JCF is the primary criminal investigative management tool that exists nationally and is managed by the Divisional Intelligence Units of each police geographic division in Jamaica.

The aforementioned reports are fed into this database to ensure that comprehensive data is available for the appropriate persons to access as part of the homicide investigative process or in general crime management.

This database will be visited in the interview segment of the study and information from this database will impact the classification exercise.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

As this study proposes to examine the victim/offender overlap as exists in the municipality of Portmore, a major limitation is the inability to infer that the results are a generalization of similar communities throughout island, or Jamaica as a whole.

Additionally, the potential that some variables may be deemed confusing also can be considered a limiting factor in the undertaking of this research.

Delimitations of this study do not point to any perceived weaknesses. This study is delimited by the conscious choice to delve into the issues of violence, murder, gang affiliation and the subsequent victim/offender overlap as it relates specifically to the municipality of Portmore, Jamaica. This is further evidenced by the structure and pointedness of the research questions and the variables that have been chosen to measure and manipulate.



## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Introduction**

As stated before, there exists extensive research on the victim/offender overlap, with many of these studies focusing on the nature and extent of the phenomenon; other studies have sought to explain, from the perspective of the offender, why they are identified as victims. However, there is a paucity, practically non-existent, body of research in this area from the Jamaican perspective and as a result this study will seek to address this gap in knowledge and enable a better understanding and insight to guide future decision making and policy development.

In this chapter, the results of the research questions posed earlier on in this paper will be presented, detailing the data gleaned:

RQ1. What is the likelihood of persons with criminal behavior or association in Portmore Jamaica, becoming victims of homicide?

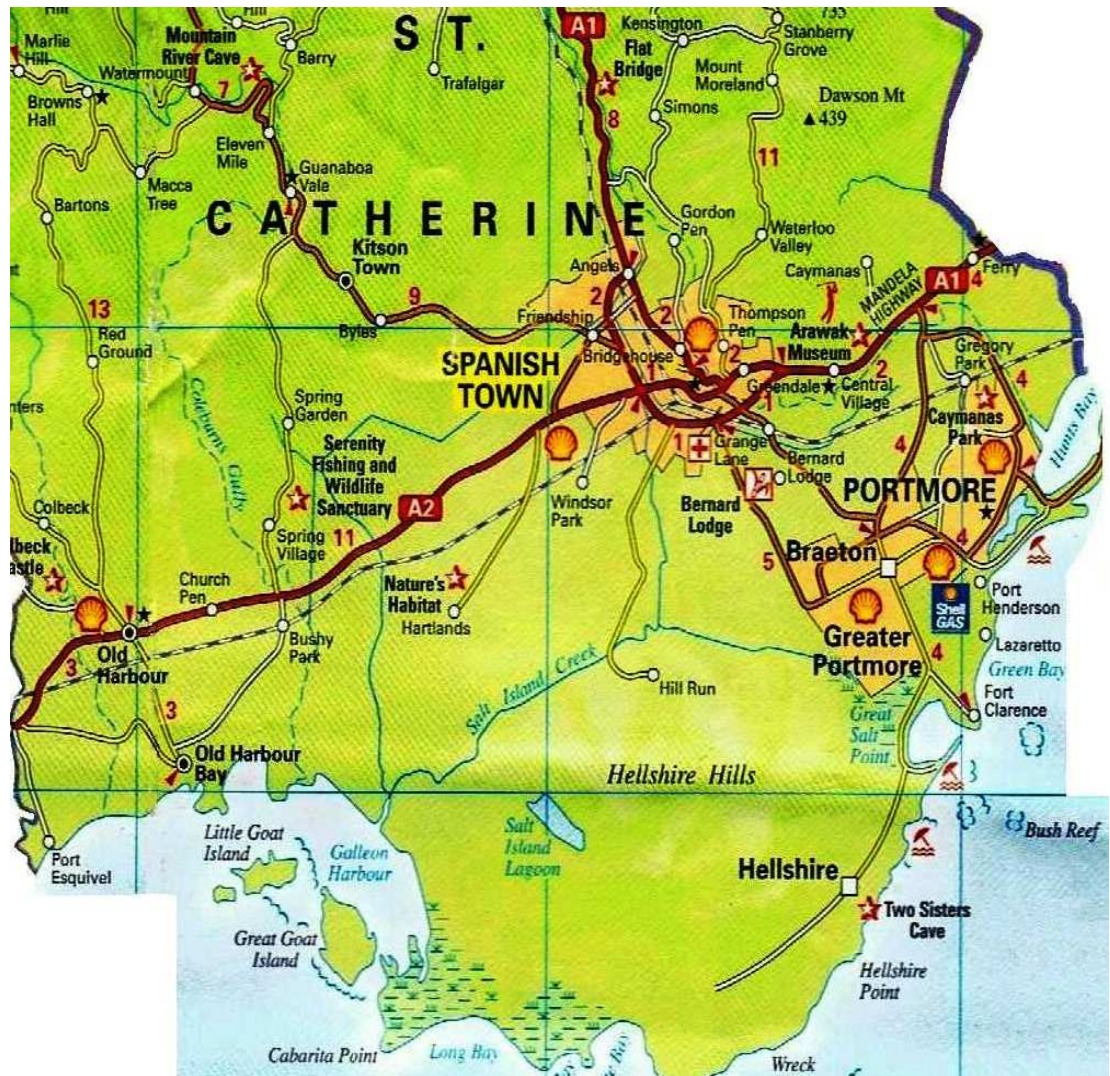
RQ2. What is the relationship between victims of homicide and their level of involvement in crime?

RQ3. What proportions of murders in Portmore, Jamaica are committed in communities built during the 1965-1990 housing boom, in relation to those built prior?

RQ4. How does the occurrence of victim/offender overlap and the homicide rate compare with the neighboring community of Central Village, which was built in the 1970's, totally informal and absolutely unplanned with the primary intention being group transfer of persons with common political affiliations.

The study was designed to analyze all murders which took place in the Southern St. Catherine Police Division (SCSPD), whose jurisdiction the Municipality of Portmore

falls within, from January 2015 to December 2018. Although the study seeks to answer questions as it relates to Portmore homicides, a comprehensive study could not be undertaken without the inclusion of similar communities and townships that fall within the SCSPD jurisdiction, namely the town of Old Harbour and the community of Central Village, both which geographically border Portmore.



Map 1. St. Catherine Parish, Jamaica (Source: JamaicaJamaica – WordPress.com)

**1. Convicted Persons** - where homicide victims were found to have a prior conviction or were wanted for a crime that they were charged posthumously, based upon investigation.

**2. Gang Member.** Gang members are persons that can be specifically linked to a criminal gang under the legal designation of gang member under The Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organisations) Bill, popularly called the ‘anti-gang’ legislation. The law makes provision for the disruption and suppression of criminal organisations and outlines offences, in order to restore a sense of security in the Jamaican society and strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies to deal with crime effectively.

**3. Gang Associate.** This designation ties the victim to be a part of a willing support system or a direct beneficiary of the spoils derived from criminal activity.

**4. Criminal offender.** Criminal offender represents persons that have been charged for a criminal offence, arrested for criminal activity or was wanted on warrant for a criminal act.

The data, therefore, may allow a homicide victim to be represented in a single classification or multiple categories. Many criminal offenders could easily be convicted persons who were gang members or associates, or who could very well have become a criminal offender, since being convicted. However, there is of course the possibility that the victim may fall in none of the categories and therefore not categorized as an offender at any level, simply being a victim.

Additional demographic data sought to identify the locality of the homicides. Classification as to whether they occurred in a formal or informal settlement, and the geographical location (Portmore, Old Harbour, Central Village) was also noted in the data gathering activity.

### **The System of Classification**

The reports utilized by the divisions Intelligence Unit and Criminal Investigative Branch are both based on extensive data that exists within the division's crime-control and analysis sections.

Gangs are considered the major threat to the municipality's citizens and the data gathering mechanisms utilized by these units in the division are the best possible tools of assessing the victims' criminal background, if any. An alert is raised with any victim if that person is already listed on the division's intelligence unit's data base, as only persons with a history of criminal activity are listed there. The listing details the individuals' activities and reasons for being listed; however not all persons who are taken into custody are put on the system. Persons where intelligence suggests they are involved in criminal activity or have been charged or convicted for a criminal offence are also included on the database.

The divisions CIB are required to investigate with an aim to proffer criminal charges against persons responsible for the murder of the division's citizens. Their investigative process requires them to also classify the victim. This is the tool they use for the eventual determination of the type of murders being committed annually such as domestic, gang related, retaliation, or sexually motivated. This method of placing the homicides into groups provides enough data to determine the criminal history of the victim or if there is no such information to suggest any.

The merging of both reports and the classification exercise that both authors of the reports went through with me to classify each victim between January 2015 and December 2018 resulted in arriving at a consensus position of classification on every one of the murders committed over the period.

The data gleaned in this chapter has contributed greatly in me coming to a conclusion on my hypothesis which speaks to a significant existence of victim/offender overlap in Portmore.

The occurrence of an almost equal amount of homicides being committed in formal versus informal communities despite the population contribution being 90% to formal and 10% to informal is also in keeping with my hypothesis that the unimproved, under-developed squatter settlements are a major and disproportionate contributor to the murder crisis in the municipality.

Initially, the expectation of the research was the conclusion that there would be a greater percentage of murders being committed in informal communities than formal communities, but the population allocation still suggests a massive contribution that is totally disproportionate to the numbers of murders committed there (in informal communities).

The hypothesis of gang contribution to the murder crisis is very definitive and is supported quite convincingly, bearing in mind that there are levels to gang association that varies from leaders to members to associates. These and all related issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

## **Results**

A total of 381 homicides were analyzed, representing the total number that was recorded in the SCSPD between January 1st 2015 and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

Portmore, which is the zone under direct study, accounted for 210 (representing 55%) of the total in the division within the specified time period. The other two zones within the SCSPD that were studied are Old Harbour (99 homicides, 26%) and Central Village (72

homicides, 19%). The inclusion of Old Harbour and Central Village in the study was important in order to facilitate a comparative analysis as, together with Portmore, they represent the three geographical policing zones in the SCSPD. The town of Old Harbour enjoys a similar demographic constitution to Portmore, comprising of old and new settlements coupled with the existence of formal and informal settlements.

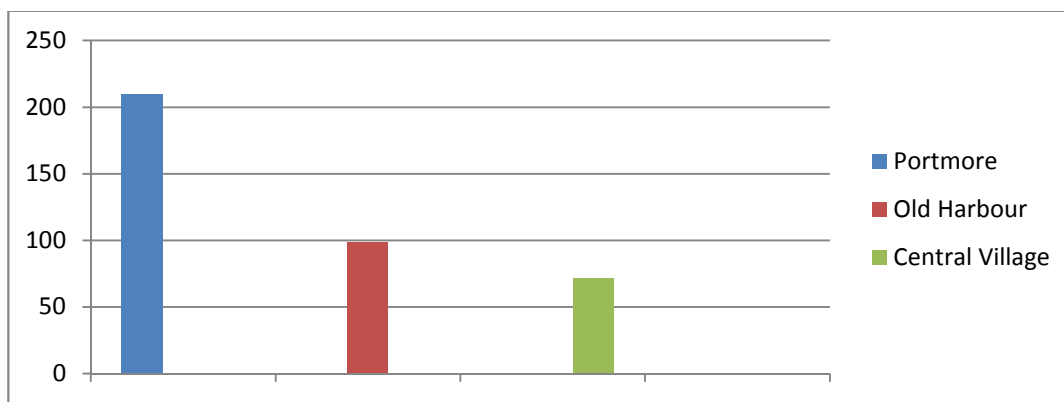


Figure 1. Graph showing the comparative homicides for area under study 2015-2018 Portmore, Old Harbour and Central Village.

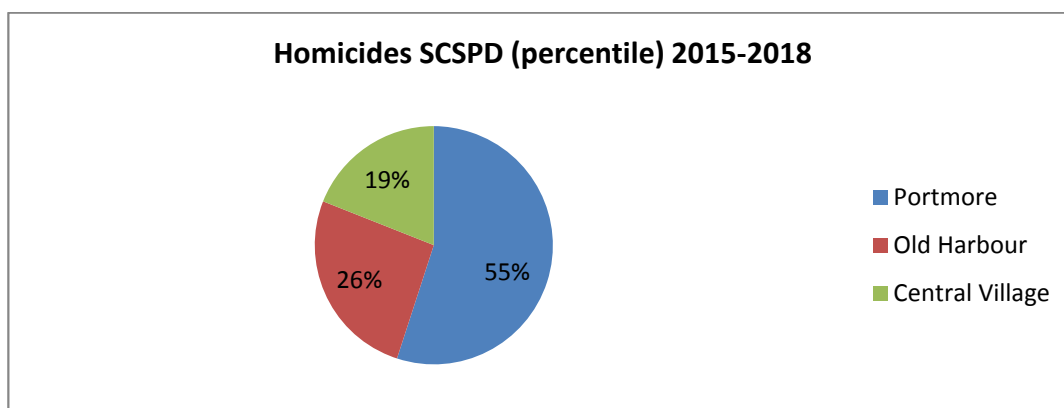


Figure 2. Homicides, 2015-2018: Portmore, Old Harbour and Central Village.

Of the 381 homicides that were recorded, 296 (78%) of the victims had some association with criminal/gang activity. but this varied according to levels which were broken down with some having qualified for up to three categories out of four.

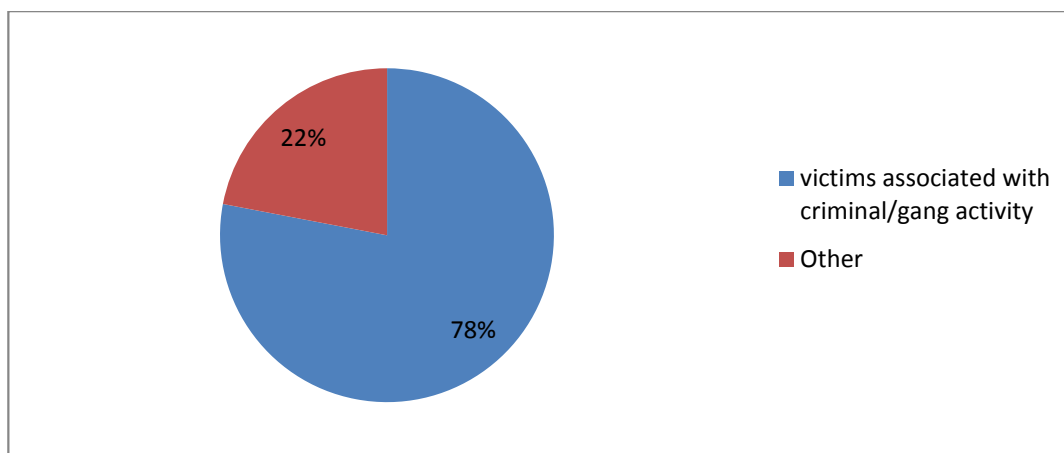


Figure 3. Pie chart showing percentile of those associated with criminal/gang activity

There was a classification of the murders also as to whether they were committed in formal structured communities or were they committed in informal/squatter settlements. This analysis found that 113 of the murders were committed in formal communities and 271 were committed in informal communities or a percentage division of 29% to 71%.

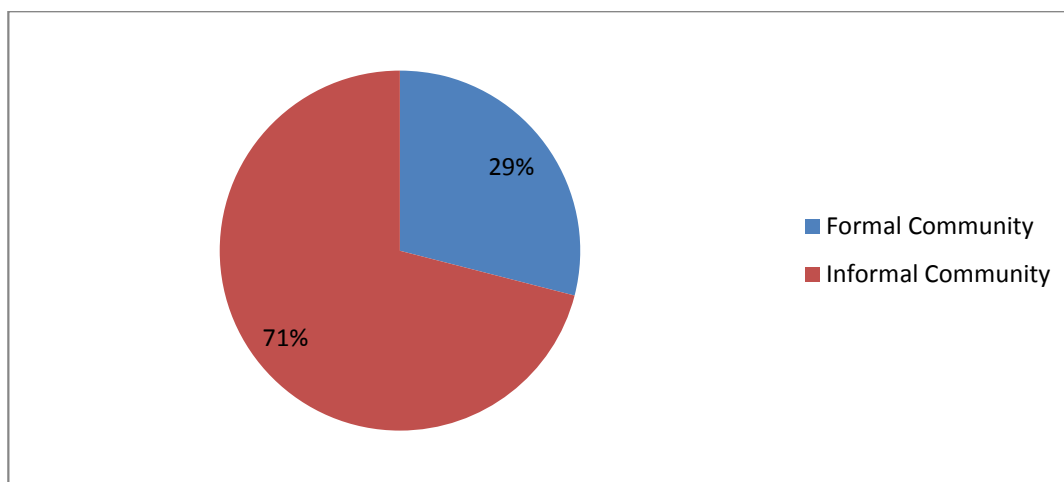


Figure4. Pie Chart showing comparative homicide rates: formal/informal communities

### Portmore Homicides

Of the 210 murders that were committed in Portmore over the period of study, analysis of the data showed that 57 of the victims (27%) had no association with criminal activity whereas 153 persons (73%) had some level of criminal conduct or association.



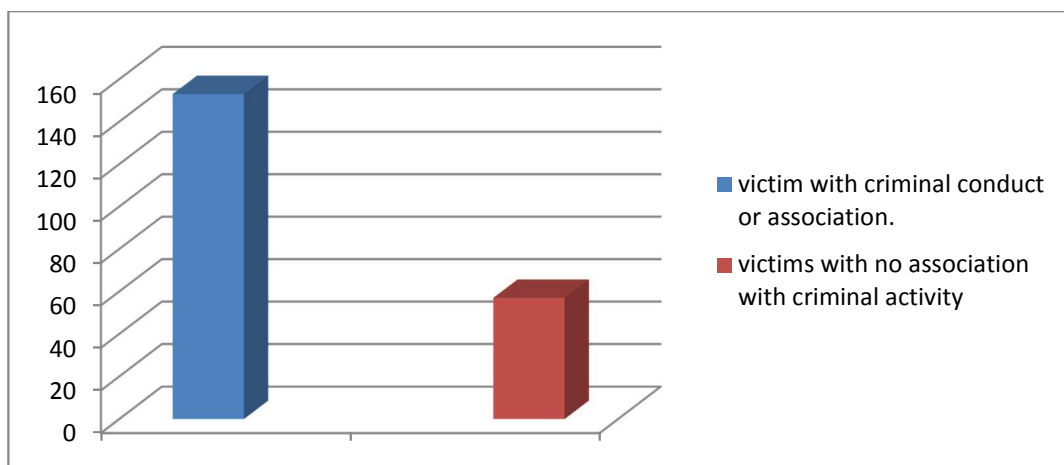


Figure 5. Portmore homicide victims with criminal/gang association

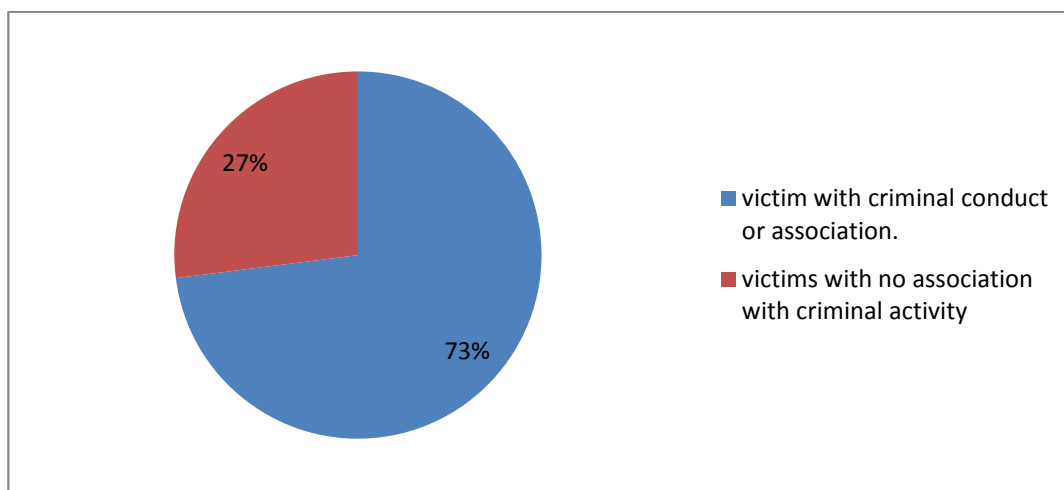


Figure 6. Portmore homicide victims with criminal/gang association

The levels again varies, as some persons actually being included in as much as three out of four categories, whilst some only one. However in the case where the final classification is to determine totally innocent as compared to any 4 of the negative groups it is immaterial.

1. Convicted persons whether pre- or posthumously: 59
2. Gang member: 86
3. Gang associate: 119
4. Criminal offender: 117

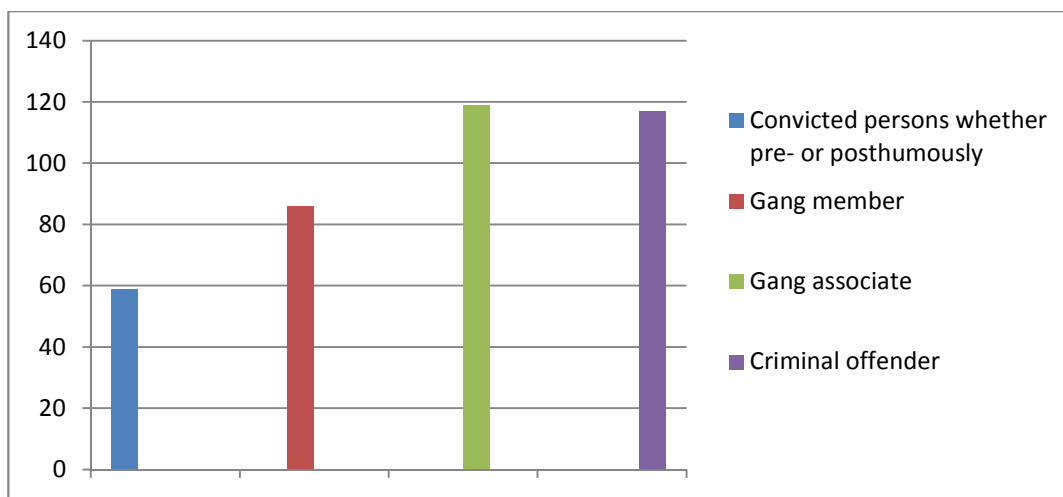


Figure 7. Homicide victims association with criminal activities

Of the 210 murders committed in Portmore, 96 (45%) occurred within formal communities and 114 (55%) occurred in communities that were deemed as informal.

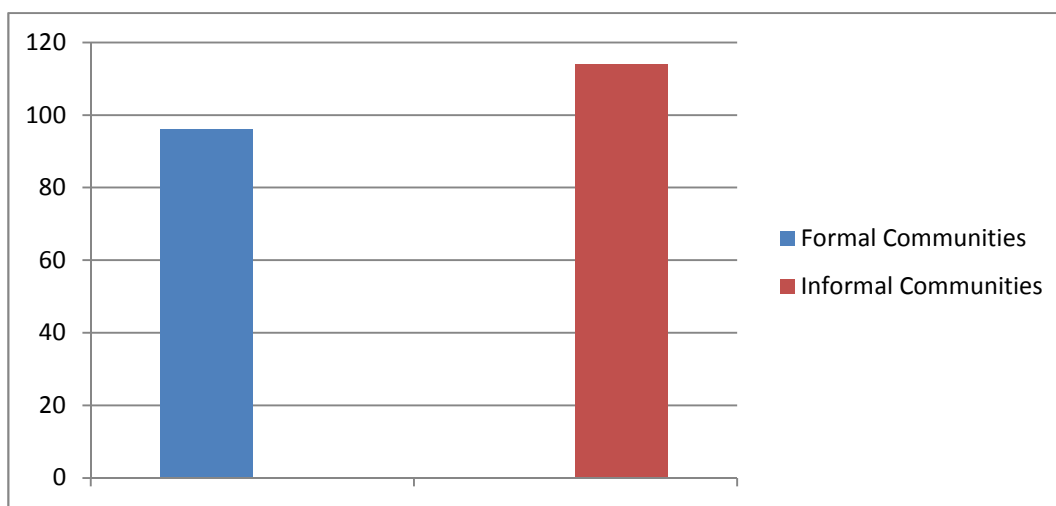


Figure 8. Portmore homicides in formal/informal communities

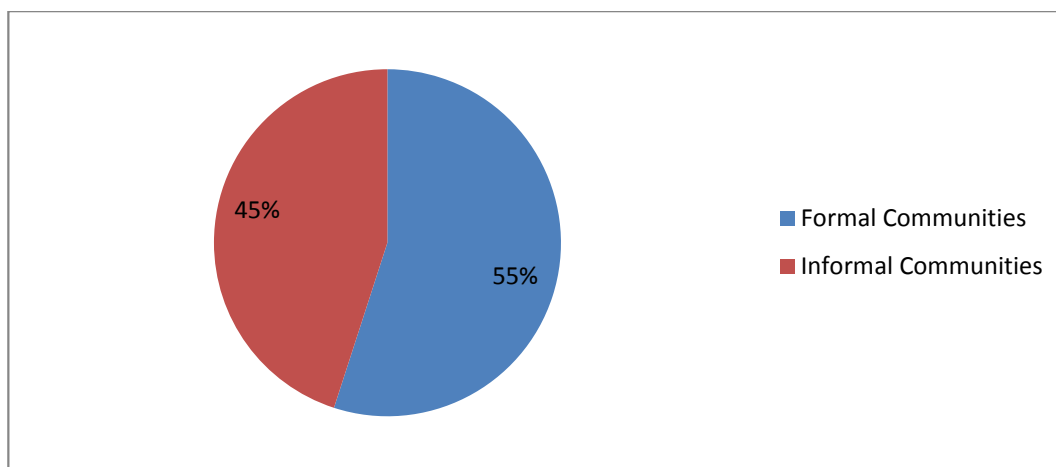


Figure 9. Portmore homicides in formal/informal communities

### Old Harbour Homicides

The victim/offender overlap comparison becomes even more relative when the data relevant to the township of Old Harbour is analyzed. Of the 99 homicides recorded in Old Harbour, 84 (85%) were in some way associated with criminal activity, as compared to 15 (15%), having no association.

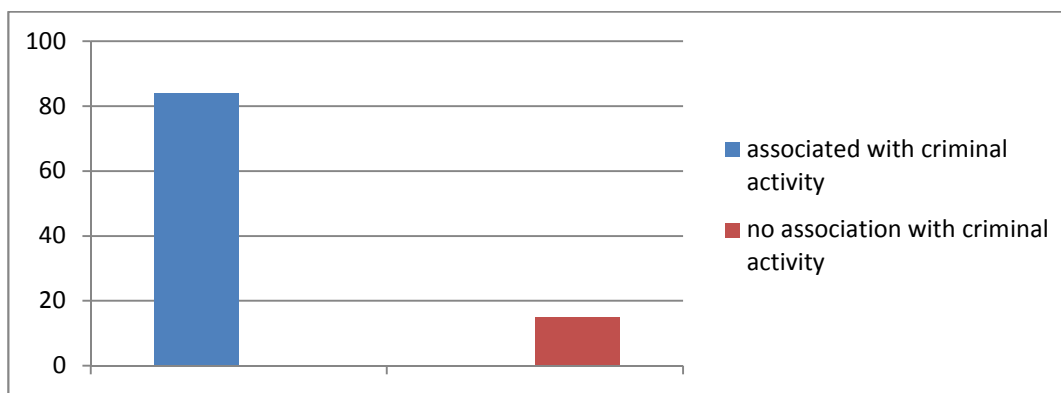


Figure 10. Old Harbour homicide victims association with criminal activity

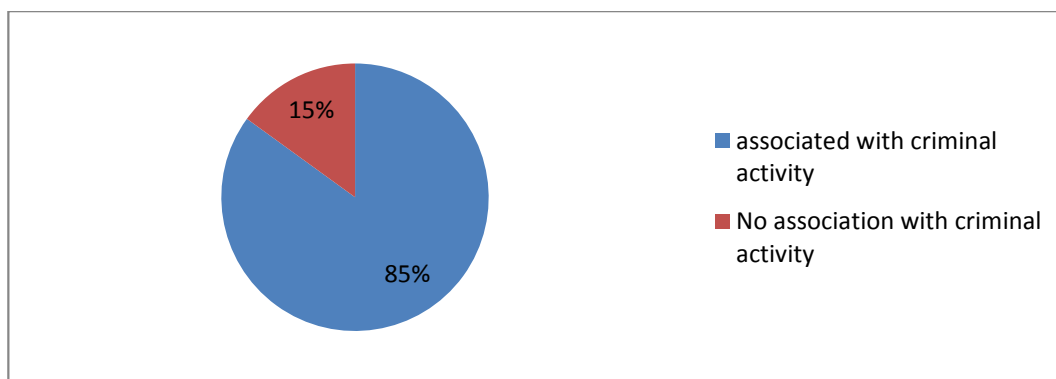


Figure 11. Old Harbour homicide victims association with criminal activity

Of the 99 murders committed in Old Harbour, 83 (84%) occurred within informal communities and 16 (16%) occurred in communities that were deemed as formal.

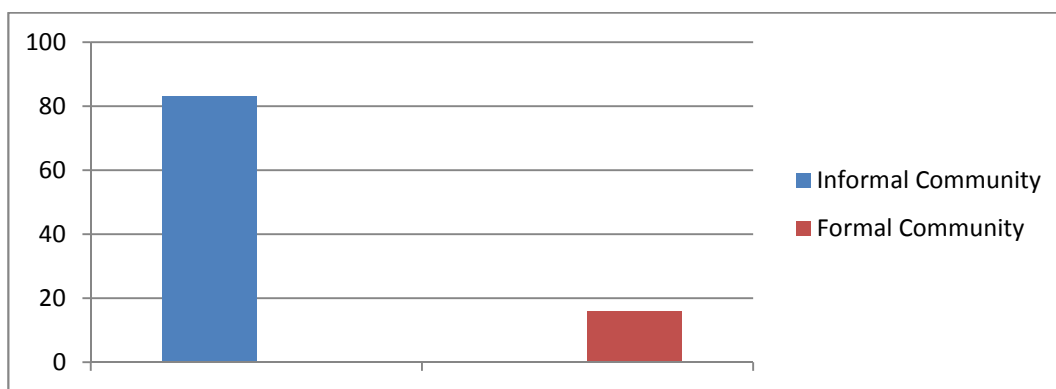


Figure 12. Old Harbour homicides occurring in formal/informal communities

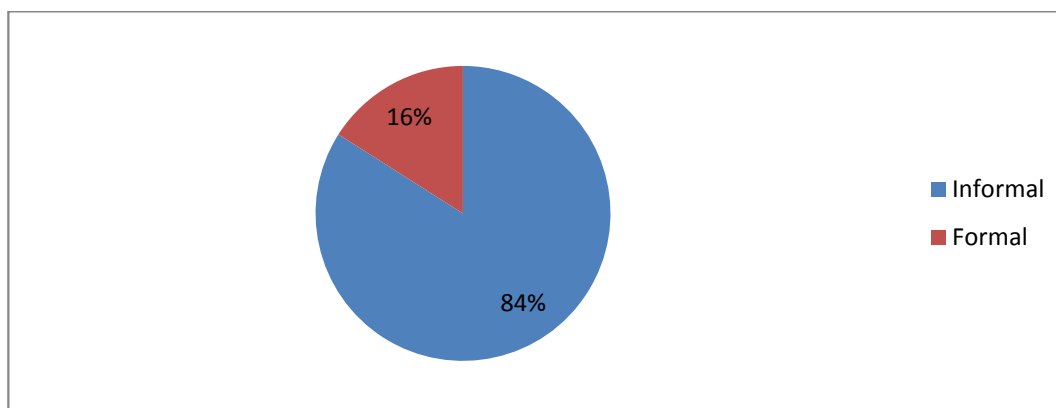


Figure 13. Old Harbour homicides occurring in formal/informal communities

## Central Village Homicides

Central Village is virtually a total informal settlement, founded by the action of settlers “capturing” unoccupied land and constructing dwellings in a disorganized, haphazard manner. Of the 72 murders that were committed in Central Village over the period of study, analysis of the data showed that 58 (81%) of the victims were in some way associated in varying degrees with criminal activity, as compared to 14 (19%), having no association.

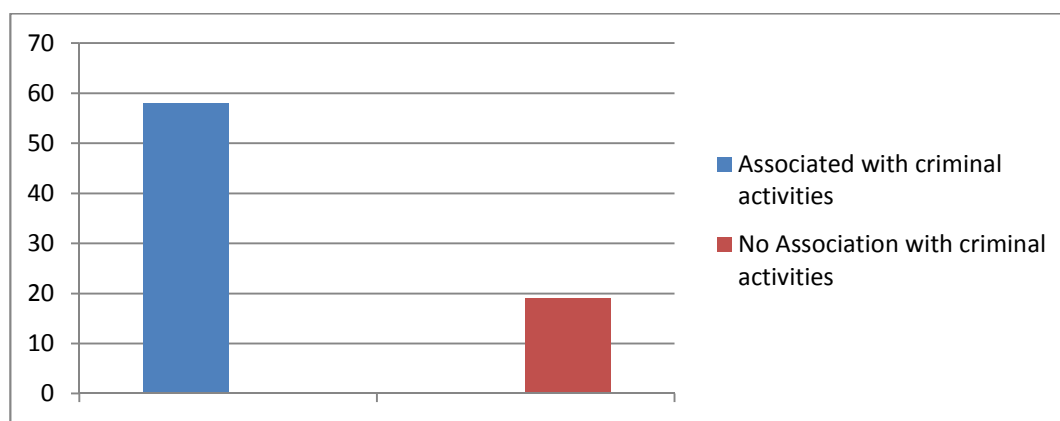


Figure 14. Central Village homicide victims association with criminal activity

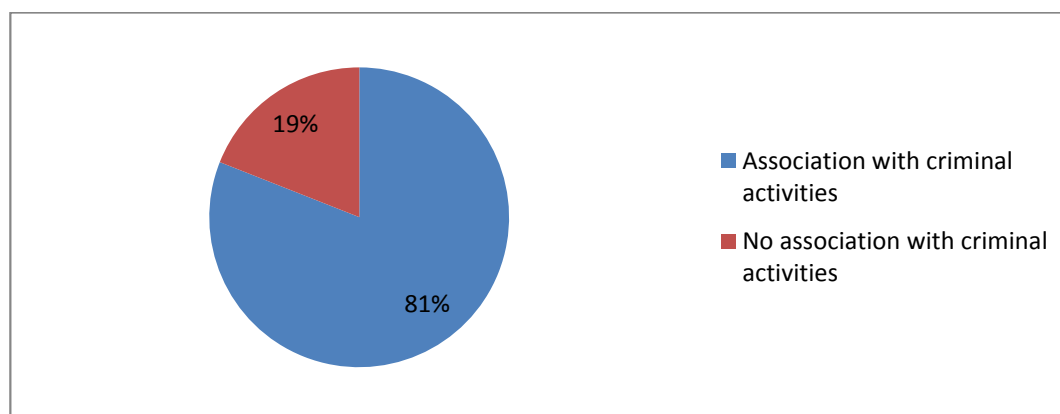


Figure 15. Central Village homicide victims association with criminal activity

A comparison of all three levels of victim/offender overlap reflects figures for Portmore of 73% for the period under study versus Old Harbour with 85% to Central Village of 81%.

The Division when looked on as a whole had similar victim/offender overlap figures with 78% having a history of criminal activity.

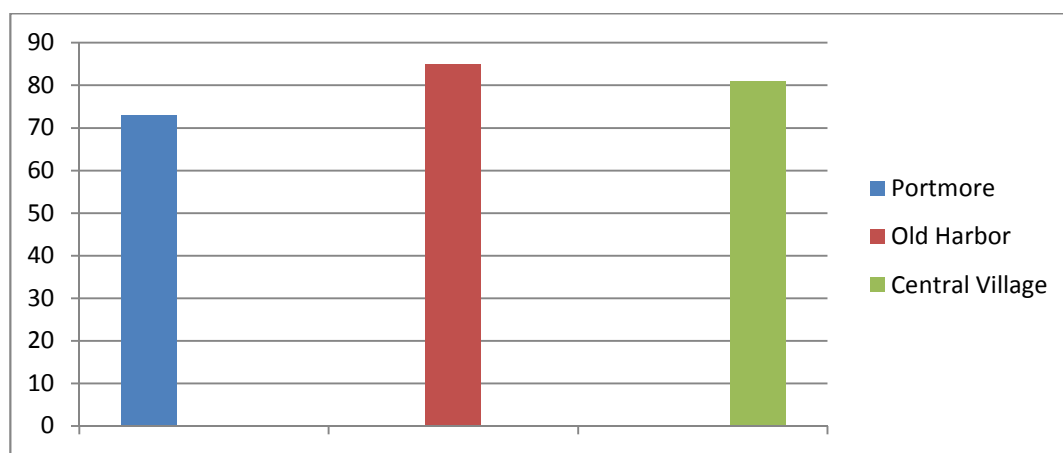


Figure 16. Community comparison of victim/offender overlap

The comparison between the formal versus informal murders in the community of Portmore and Old Harbour reflected that 55% of Portmore's murders took place in informal communities compared to Old Harbour having 85% of their murders being committed in informal communities.

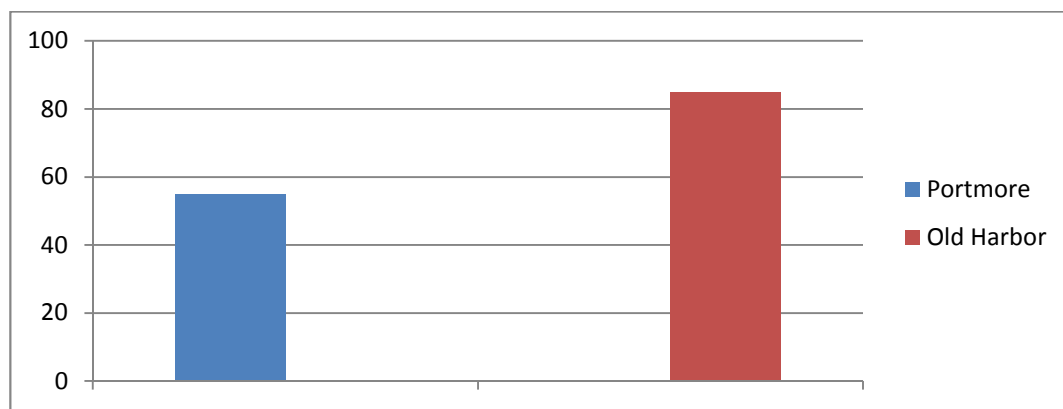


Figure 17. Portmore/Old Harbour homicide victims in informal settlements

This compares to the division when looked on as a whole that reflected murders in informal communities at 71%.

### **The Gang Factor**

Gang involvement was studied in an attempt to determine the driving force behind the homicides in Portmore and unearthed the following:

- 1) 104 or 49% of the murder victims were associated in some way or form with gang activity.

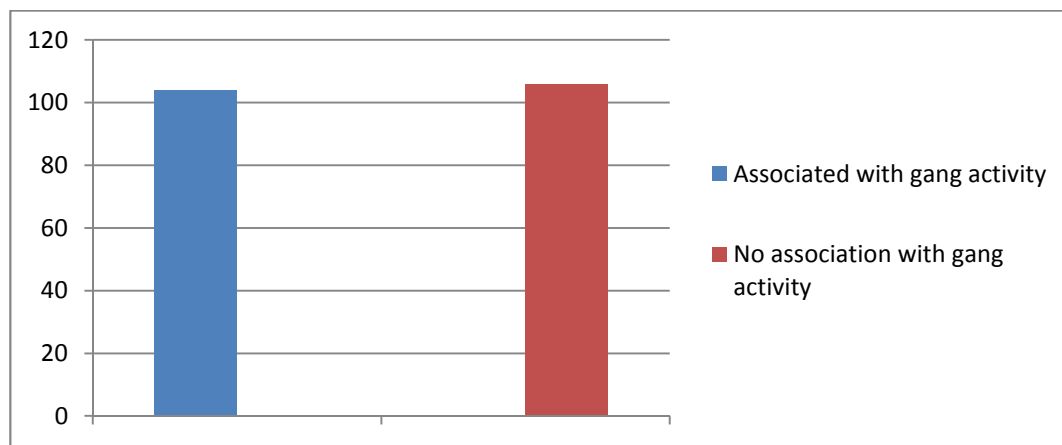


Figure 18. Portmore homicide victims/gang activity

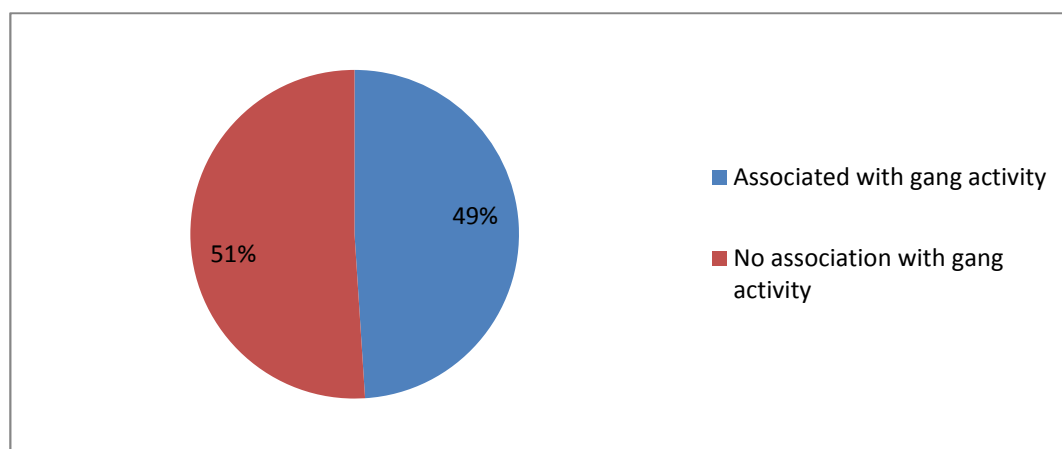


Figure 19. Portmore homicide victims/gang activity

This was not dissimilar to the division as a whole that showed that of the 381 victims of murder 200 of them or 54.4% had some involvement with gangs.

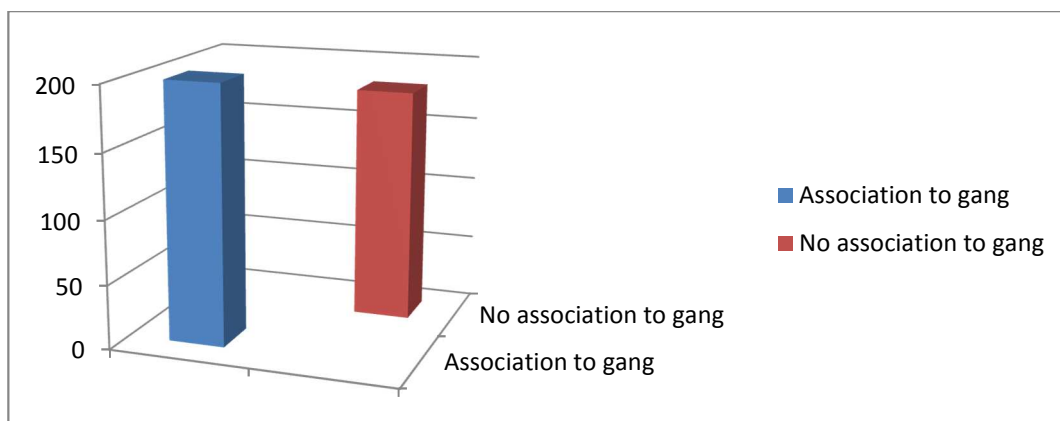


Figure 20. Portmore homicide victims/gang activity

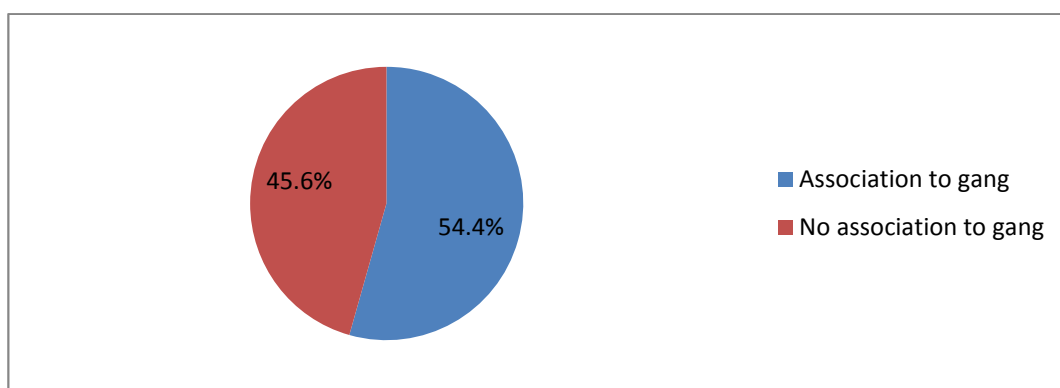


Figure 21. Portmore homicide victims/gang activity

The comparatives to other zones under study reflect gang association with murder victims of similar levels that being. Old Harbour reflected 85% of all victims having some level of gang involvement.

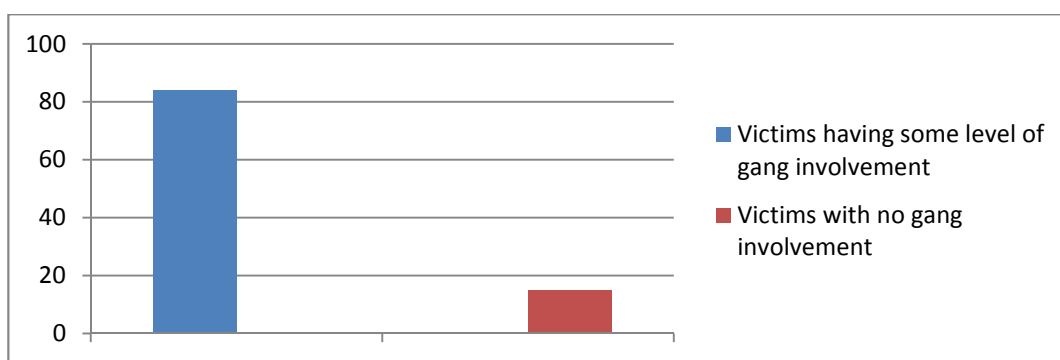


Figure 22. Old Harbour homicide victims/gang activity



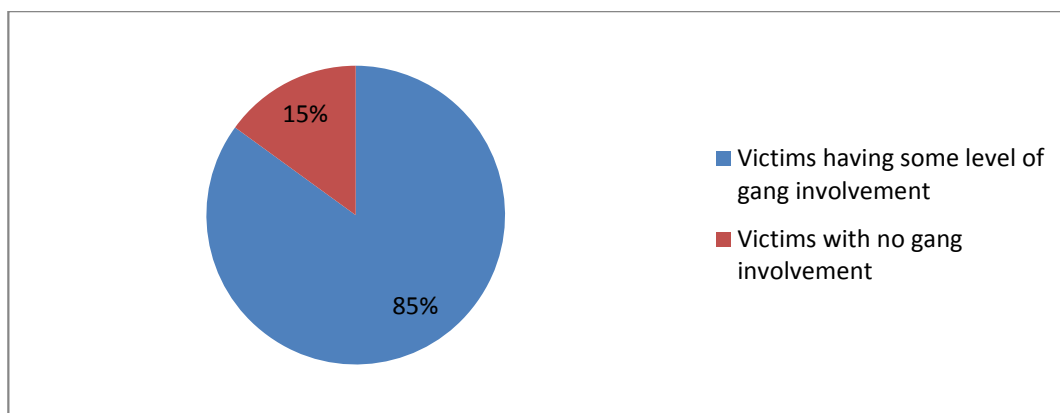


Figure 23. Old Harbour homicide victims/gang activity

Of the persons charged or the suspects in the murders of the 210 murder victims of Portmore 2015- 2018, 92% or 193 of them are connected in some way to gangs.

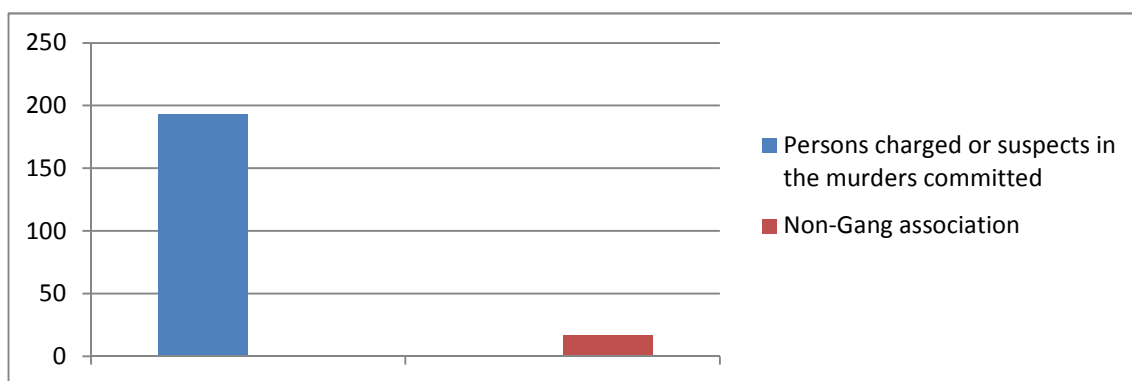


Figure 24. Portmore homicide suspects/convicts gang affiliation

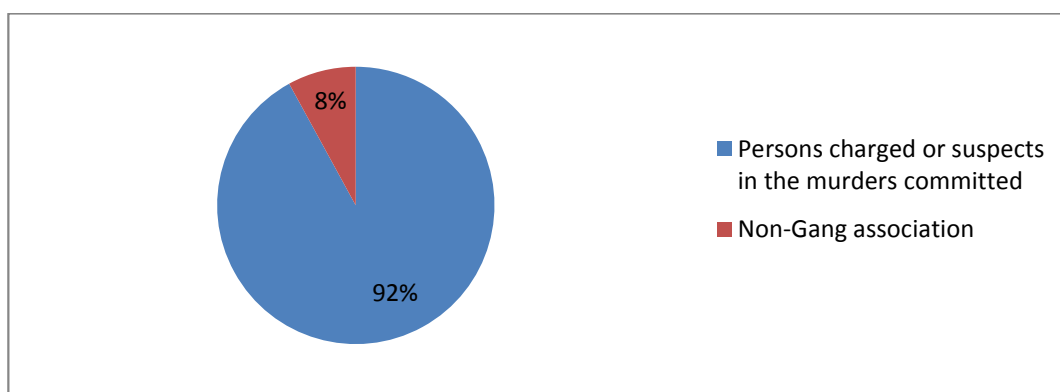


Figure 25. Portmore homicide suspects/convicts gang affiliation

The division on a whole that encompasses the three geographical zones that the 381 murders occurred in also listed that the suspects or accused persons of the 381 murders

were listed as gang members or associates in 332 of the murders. This represented a percentile of 87%.

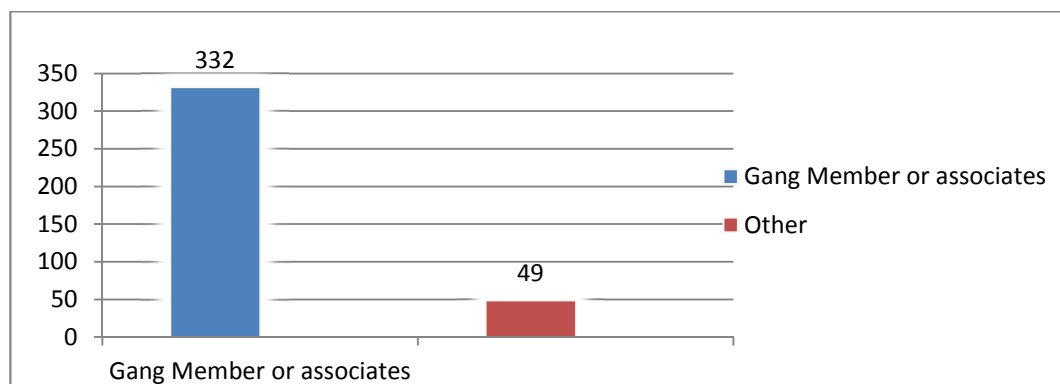


Figure 26. SCSPD homicide suspects/convicts gang affiliation 2015-2018

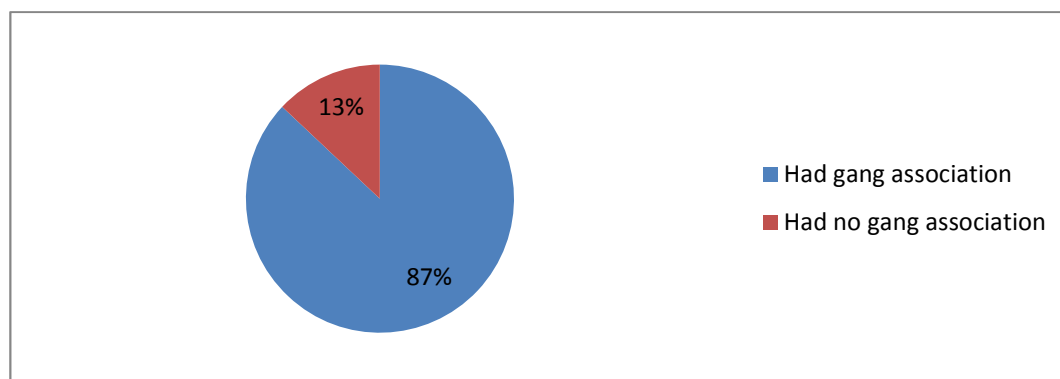


Figure 27. SCSPD homicide suspects/convicts gang affiliation 2015-2018

### The use of guns

The use of guns in the commission of the murders was also studied, with this representing an average of 90 percent of all murders of the 381 under study and 93 percent in the murders under study for Portmore specifically. Actual figures show 343 murders committed by the gun and 38 by other implements for SCSPD murders under study 2015 to 2018.

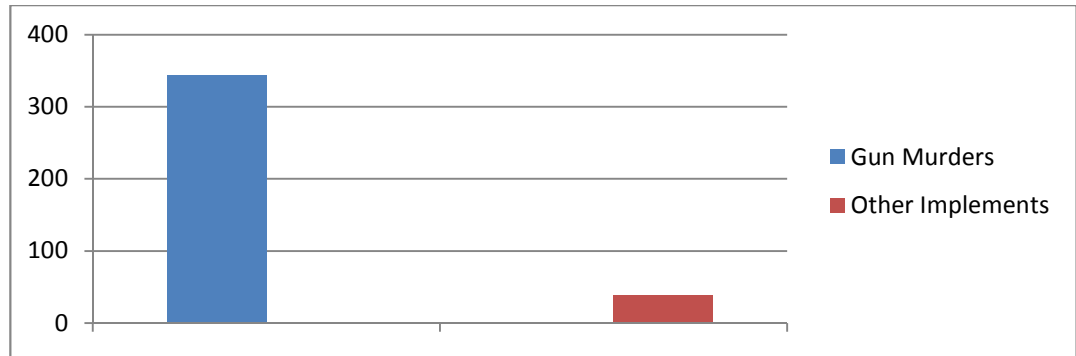


Figure 28. SCSPD use of guns in homicides

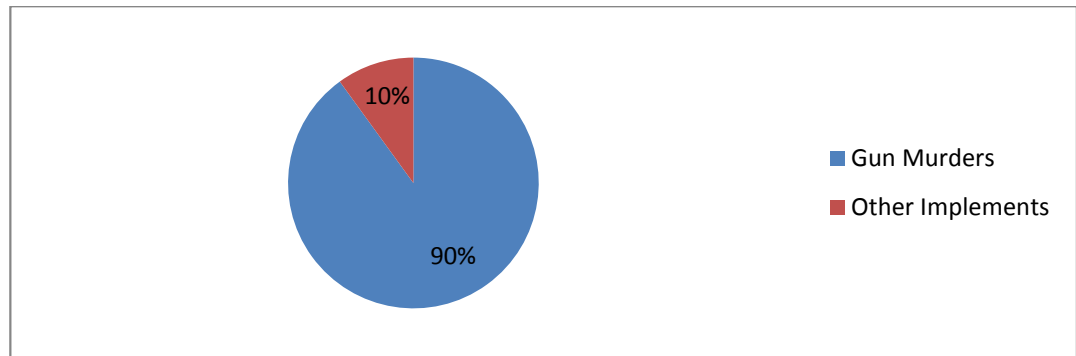


Figure 29. SCSPD use of guns in homicides

The Portmore specific zone maintains almost a mirror statistic of 94 percent of all murders being committed with the use of guns.

### **Murder Rate Per Capita Comparison**

Portmore had a murder rates as follows:

2015 – 0.29 per 1,000

2016 - 0.28 per 1,000

2017 - 0.30 per 1,000

2018 - 0.27 per 1,000

Average for period under study of 0.28 per 1,000

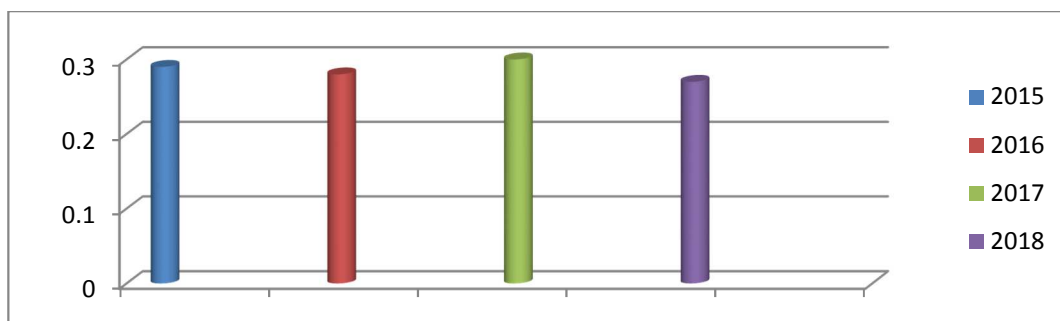


Figure 30. Portmore homicide per 1,000 in 2015-2018

Portmore's murder rate for gang members for period of study was 38 per 1,000.

Portmore gang list being 1007.

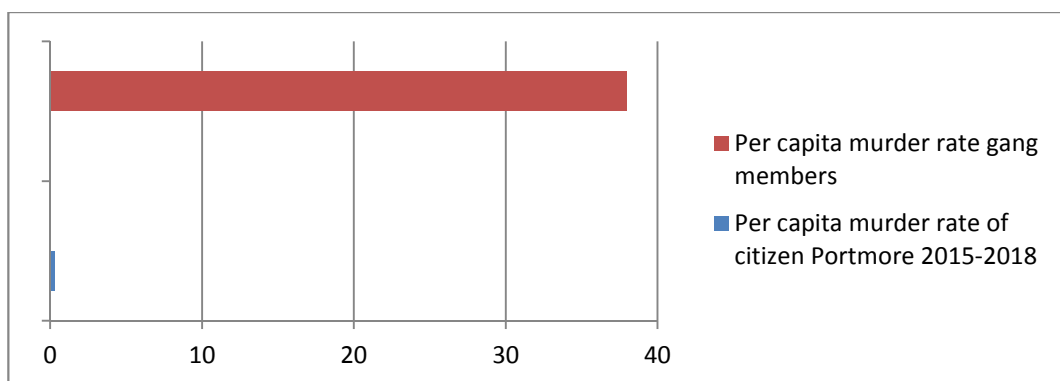


Figure 31. Portmore gang members homicide per 1,000

### Old Harbour.

2015 – 0.59 per 1,000

2016 – 0.79 per 1,000

2017 – 0.76 per 1,000

2018 – 0.90 per 1,000

Average for period under study 0.76 per 1,000

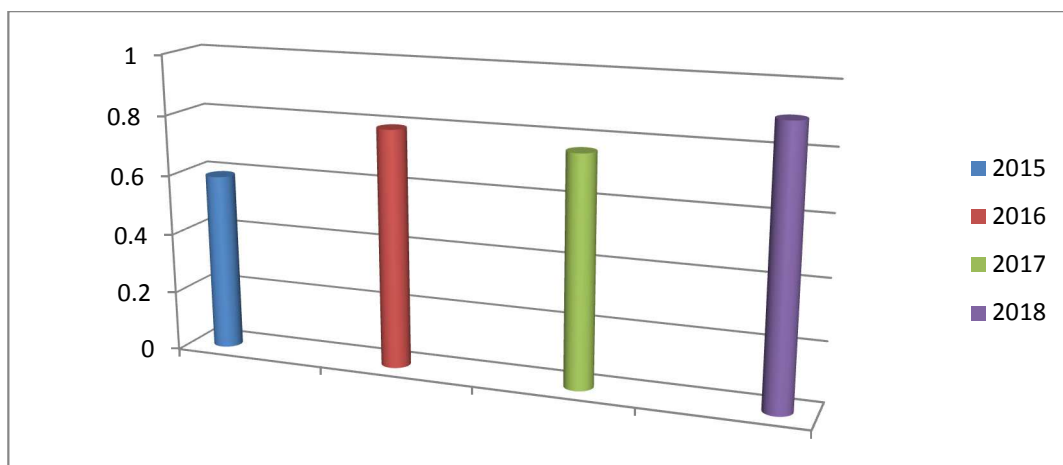


Figure 32 Old Harbour homicide rate per 1,000

Old Harbour's murder rate of gang members for period under study 61.66 per 1,000.

(Old Harbour gang list: 300)



Figure 33. Old Harbour gang members homicide per 1,000.

### Central Village.

2015 – 1.25 per 1,000

2016 – 1.6 per 1,000

2017 – 1.8 per 1,000

2018 – 1.8 per 1,000

Average for period under study 1.61 per 1,000

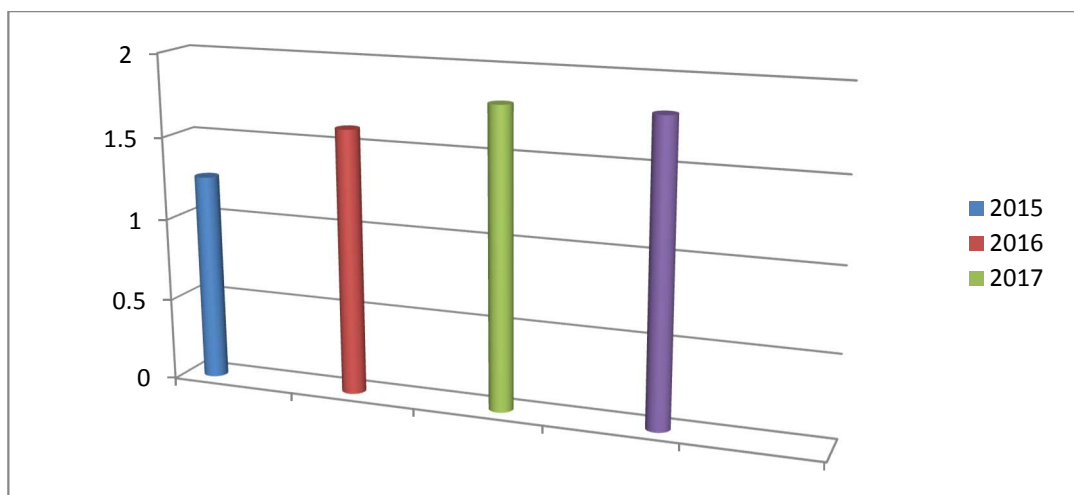


Figure 34. Central Village homicide rate per 1,000

Central Village murder rate for gang members for period under study 48.60 per 1,000

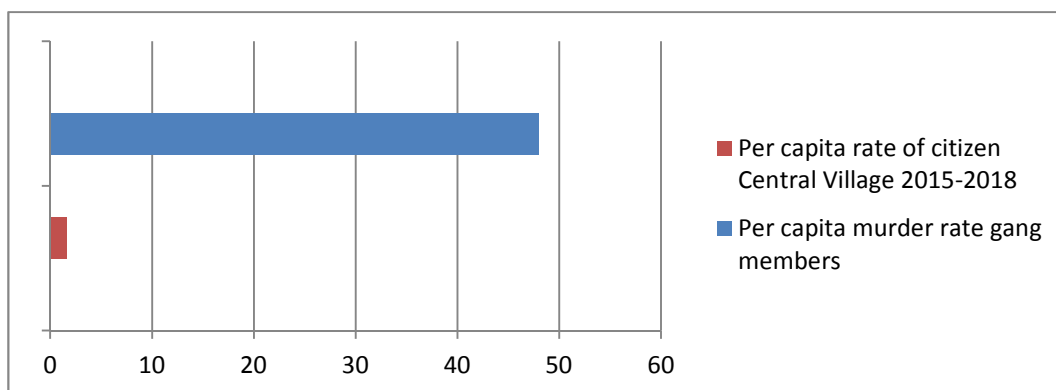


Figure 35. Central Village gang members homicide rate per 1,000

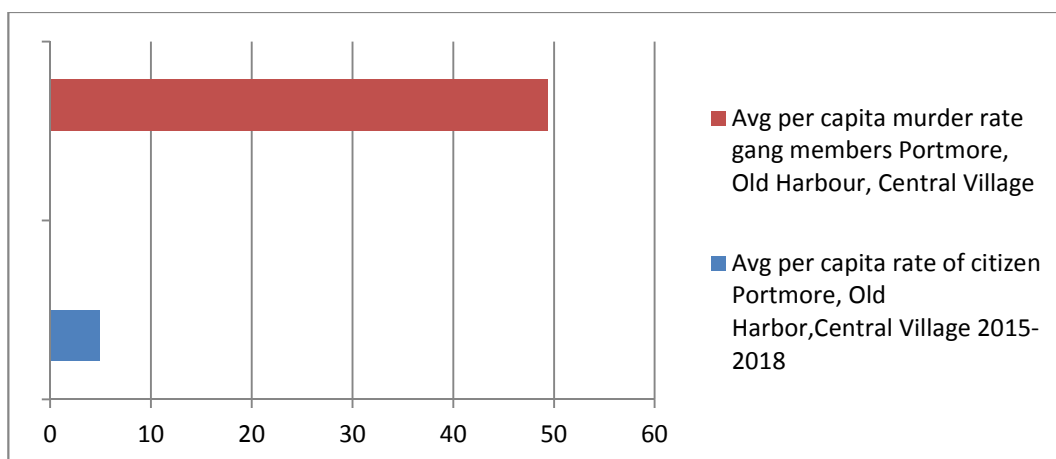


Figure 36. Portmore, Old Harbour, Central Village per 1,000 homicide rates

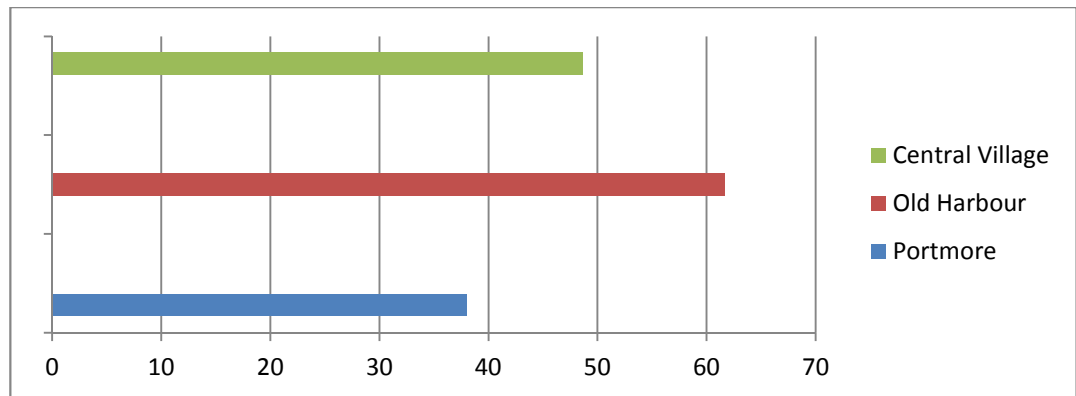


Figure37 showing comparative murder rates for gang members per zone.

The calculations that have been derived from the study and have been expressed in this chapter will be analyzed in Chapter 5 and will include ambient factors that have influenced the noted data. The solutions and a solid attempt to communicate a full appreciation of why and how we got there will also be attempted.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion, Implications, Recommendations, and Summary**

### **Introduction**

The primary purpose of the study is an analysis of the homicides in Portmore and the measurement of the degree of victim/offender overlap. There is also the question of why the homicide rate of this community should be so high, considering it has so much preventable influences that the ones that preceded it did not: concrete housing, road infrastructure, utilities and a general environment that allows policing to be possible. This is in contrast to the shanty style developments of the pre-colonial era that was unplanned and lacked the existence of even hygienic considerations, much less utilities and road infrastructure. Even when other communities that had a similar genesis are analyzed, such as Elleston Flats in St. Andrew parish, the frequency and numbers of homicides greatly differ.

The answer may lie in the possibility of the theory of the victim/offender overlap or may simply be related to the informal settlements that remained, and the failure of integration and cohabitation in the developments of this post colonial community.

The analysis therefore will look on the research in its entirety with an aim to compare with the other two communities in southern St. Catherine that share borders and have similarities and stark differences that assist in analysis by comparison.

### **Victims with Offending versus Non-offending Criminal History**

Bearing in mind that Old Harbour has similarities to Portmore in respect of part formal versus informal settlements (although Old Harbour's developments are much later and much less), both are in stark contrast to Central Village (which is virtually all



unplanned and is basically a shanty town with some concrete houses), we are able to determine that the level of victim/offender overlap is significant but comparable to a neighboring community with less formal development and one with none. Analysis shows the level in this regard for Portmore being 73% in comparison to Old Harbour's 85%.

The overall total of the murders studied in the SCSPD when grouped together reflected a victim/offender overlap of 73% which is in keeping in range with the Portmore analysis of 78%.

### **Homicides committed in formal versus informal communities of Portmore.**

Portmore's homicides under study reflected that 45% were committed in the formal communities and 55% in the informal ones. This is peculiar as geographically the formal communities make up the majority of occupied space as compared to the few informal settlements that existed prior to Independence, namely Gregory Park, Newland, Naggos Head, Dunbeholden, Rat Town, Watson Grove and Christian Pen. This is in comparison to the communities that were established since Independence that are more formal: Bridgeport, Independence City, Garveymeade, Westmeade, Southboro, Waterford, Westchester, Christian Gardens, Cedar Grove, Edgewater, Bridgeview, Passage Fort, Portsmouth, Cumberland, West Cumberland, Hellshire and the massive Greater Portmore. This compares to the SCSPD 71% of homicides in informal communities, noting that this also accounts for the Central Village zone which is all informal.

Old Harbour's comparative of 15% formal as compared to 85% informal could be accounted for by the vast differentiation between the size and population of the informal

settlements in Old Harbour. Old Harbour's formalization of mass developments started at least 20 years after that of Portmore, and at a much slower pace.

### **The Informal Settlements Factor in Portmore**

A look at the geographic allocation of homicides between formal versus informal communities and the alarming numbers that were being committed demonstrated a pattern of construction that virtually encircled or attached the new developments to the former shanty towns, without doing any improvements in the informal settlements.

The end result is that they maintained the patterns of homicide in keeping with similar zones in Kingston that were pre-independence communities. An example is the area policed by the St. Andrew South Police Division (SASPD), which comprises a number of traditional Kingston inner city garrison communities which reflected homicides of 147 in 2018 with an adult population of 38,000 residents, translating into a per capita murder rate of 390 (in comparison, the per capita homicide rate in Portmore's informal communities was 285). It should be noted, however, that there is a mix of formal and informal communities in the SASPD coupled with a deep history of garrison politics and generations of feuding families and groups.

The construction of these formal communities also created an effect of growing the informal settlements during the construction phase as labour is required and then because infrastructure such as schools and commerce follow the new developments, this further grows the informal settlement population without growing the informal infrastructure in any material way; more shacks are built but they are being compressed into the same land allocation as before and this serves to encourage crime and by extension, homicides.

Even if we were subtract the 55% or 114 murders committed in the informal communities from the study, there exists a disturbing number of 96 murders being committed in what could easily be described as lower middle class communities. Under no standard could the concrete style housing be considered slums as it is not devoid of infrastructure and social amenities; the only real connection is that the occupants largely descend from the former slums of Kingston.

This then begs the question: may it be possible that culture and codes of conduct can be translated from the movement of a group from one location to another and then from generation to generation? This however is countered by the normal explanation that it is the conditions of the slum and the characteristics of same that create the culture of violence that is common in Jamaica; the poor, after all, exist in rural Jamaica and they still do not kill each other as compared to the slums of Kingston and St. Catherine. So the former slum dwellers moved into the new Portmore and without the contributing social conditions have managed to replicate a culture of killing from generation to generation.

This conduct has a common vehicle: gangs. Of the 96 homicides (45%) committed in Portmore, 49% of the victims were involved in gang activity.

### **The Gang Factor**

A total of 200 of the 381 persons murdered during the study were able to be tied to specific gangs with actual monikers; this represents a total of 54.4 %. The suspects charged or uncharged in the listed number of gangs is 198, with only two of the gang members being killed by non-gang members, their deaths coming about as a result of domestic disputes. This figure would be high by itself, but with the inclusion of

innocent victims that were suspected to be killed by members of gangs, the total is 312 (of the 381).

The primary tool used in the execution of murders is guns numbering 343, 90% of murders committed, which are almost unilaterally imported by, and traded, by gangs. The gun is also the primary tool used in the commission of the 312 murders committed by gangs. Based on the fact that gangs are an endemic part of Jamaican slum culture and 55% of the murders are in fact committed in these informal communities that definitely have all the characteristics of a slum, then the gangs will form there.

The gang contribution within the formal communities has also been consistent. Of the 210 murders committed in Portmore, 92% of them have been designated to have been committed by gangs. A total of 30 gangs are said to exist in the communities of Portmore to which 190 of the 210 murders are attributed. The percentage of these murders that were committed in the informal communities by gangs mirror the formal with percentages of 91 and 89, respectively.

There are logistics that contribute to the deadly effect of gang activity, such as use of guns and proximity to rival neighbouring factions; it is however the social question as to why they are created in circumstances which boast such significantly improved infrastructure?

The normal factors that exist in gang creation (such as the paucity of income and lack of opportunity) do not fail to exist because infrastructure and better housing is supplied. The persons who came to Portmore were still poor, and by extension, susceptible to the economic contribution to gang activity. This is perhaps the second major contribution to the failure of Portmore to not replicate the killing epidemic of inner

city Kingston; the first being the lack of a plan to deal with the informal communities that existed prior to the introduction of the formal.

### **Research Question 1**

*What is the likelihood of persons with criminal behavior or association in Portmore, Jamaica, becoming victims of homicide?*

For the period under study, the SCSPD had listed 1007 persons as gang members. As stated earlier, under Jamaican law anyone who engages in, supports, compliments or benefits from gang activity can be listed as a gang member and subsequently charged for said activity. The population of in Portmore during the time that this study was conducted was a little over 182,000 persons. This represents that approximately 0.5% of all adult occupants of Portmore are considered, under existing legislation, as "gang members".

In the period under study, Portmore had an average annual murder rate over the four years of 28 per 100,000 adults. The murder rate for gang members of Portmore was 3800 per 100,000 adults. Consequently, if 1007 is treated as the total number of gang members in the municipality of Portmore during this time, this places a person who engages in gang activity or criminal activity approximately 136 times more likely than an unclassified citizen of Portmore to be the victim of a homicide.

There is virtually no one appearing on the criminal register (save and except 12 sex offenders) that are not associated at some level with a gang. I make this point to highlight the relationship to criminal activity and the list of registered gang members. This gives credibility to the use of the gang list in determining the risk association with criminal activity.

The gang member murder rate compared to the traditional murder rate speaks volumes to the answer to research question one as the comparative reflects the extreme likelihood of persons with involvement in crime becoming a victim of murder, especially when it is considered that Portmore's per capita murder rate at 28 is approximately half of Jamaica's per capita murder rate which fluctuates between the high forties to mid fifties. However once criminal activity (that is in effect married to gang association and membership) occurs, the risk sky rockets.

The likelihood therefore of a criminal becoming a victim of homicide in Portmore can only be described as extreme.

## **Research Question 2**

*What is the relationship between victims of homicide and their level of involvement in crime?*

The research examined 381 murders in the period under study. A total of 210 occurred in Portmore.

Of the 210 victims of homicide, 153 or 73% were found to have involvement in crime at various levels. The relationship to the entire zone under study (the SCSPD) is similar; 78% was determined to have some relationship with criminal activity. This shows that there is not a significant differentiation in risk in Portmore, as compared with the division. In fact, if Portmore homicides are removed from the study and an attempt is made to analyze Central Village and Old Harbour as a group, the findings will show that of the 171 murders committed there, a total of 85% of the victims have a relationship with, and history of, criminal activity.

The victim/offender overlap is established here in a very significant way, in that the theory of victim/offender overlap is in essence maintaining that victims of crime are many times perpetrators of crimes themselves. The assumption is therefore made that there exists the possibility that other victims may have been perpetrators of crime and just not yet caught by the various mechanisms designed to capture the data. However, even if we maintain that there are higher levels of victim/ offender overlap in the other two zones under study, 85.5% there is still a significant occurrence in Portmore, that being 73%.

Victim/offender overlap in Portmore is not limited to the crime of murder, however the rate detected in this study reflects an extremely high overlap. This could be fuelled by the prevalence of guns which makes murder easier to commit, or simply the proximity that rival gangs cohabitate and the ease by which they can access each other.

Although this study highlights the significant victim/offender overlap, there is no secret in gang circles that members are more likely to become victims of the very crime they commit.

The message that should emanate from this study should hopefully be transmitted to the soon-to-be offender that he is virtually guaranteeing his own demise, once he makes the decision of embarking on the path of deviant behaviour.

### **Research Question 3**

*What proportions of murders in Portmore, Jamaica are committed in communities built during the 1965-1990 housing boom, in relation to those built prior?*

The study revealed that 46% of the homicides (totalling 96) occurred in the communities built within the housing boom that occurred between 1965 and 1990; the

other 54% occurred in the informal communities that existed prior. Simply bearing in mind that the formal communities occupy more than ninety percent of housing land in use and a similar ratio of the 182,000 plus occupants, it speaks volumes for the contribution that the shanty type slums that exist in Portmore have contributed to the homicide rate of the municipality. It in many ways demonstrates the success of the new type of housing solutions and the accompanying plan that was executed.

There is of course the consideration that for the new hope housing solutions that were introduced into Portmore, many that live there never would have and thus never been exposed to the murder culture under study. However, reminding ourselves that these formal housing schemes were populated by persons that previously occupied slums in Kingston, the risk to them would have been present whether they moved to Portmore or stayed in Kingston.

The comparative of the contribution to the murder rate of Portmore by informal versus informal communities brings to light the danger of reporting crime and coming to judgment on communities.

Based on formal publication of Portmore's crime statistics, it gives the impression that the post Independence schemes have been an abject failure, which is only altered when the light of study is shone upon it. At present, the recording system of criminal activity causes these statistics to be attributed to the area covered by the local police station and this often causes confusion as to where the crime actually occurred. Oftentimes, these stations bear the name of the new schemes and therefore would appear to be reporting crime to have occurred in the noted community. An example of this is the Caymanas Police Station that is named after the Caymanas Gardens community



that was built post 1965. However the homicides typically occur in the Gregory Park community which is a pre-independence informal settlement located in the Caymanas police area and not in the Caymanas Gardens community.

It is not the new schemes that have failed, but rather the failure lies in a plan to make the informal developments equal to the formal communities in respect to the infrastructural allocation or basic standards of living.

Although it demonstrates that an alarmingly high number of murders are being committed in Portmore, it more importantly demonstrates the effect neglect can have on a community in respect of the propensity to kill.

Less than 18,000 people live in informal settlements in Portmore, but in four years these communities experienced 114 murders and thus had a per capita murder rate of 158. This is compared to the formal communities which experienced 96 murders that occurred in the same time period with a population of approximately 172,000 persons reflecting a per capita murder rate of approximately 14. The end result is that a resident of an informal community is 12 times more likely to be murdered as against a resident of a formal community in the municipality of Portmore.

#### **Research Question 4**

*How does the occurrence of victim/offender overlap and the homicide rate compare with the neighboring community of Central Village, which was built in the 1970's, totally informal and absolutely unplanned with the primary intention being group transfer of persons with common political affiliations?*

The study reflected victim/offender overlap figures for both communities within the study period. In the case of Portmore, victim/offender overlap was present in 73% of the

murders which occurred as compared to Central Village with 81%. Central Village which has a per capita murder rate of 169 is experiencing a murder rate that is over 5 times that of Portmore and twice that of Old Harbour, despite all three making up the SCSPD.

There are a few dominant factors that influence this. Firstly the level of victim/offender overlap is occurring because of the existence of several small to medium size gangs that are located in this community allowing gang members to kill each other with impunity, as often as the opportunity arises. Also, in addition to the gang factor, there is also an income stream emanating from the remittances of former residents who now reside overseas derived from the proceeds of narcotics trafficking.

It is however the informal settlement factor that is dominant. This community is almost all squatters and is in every way, shape and form, an informal settlement unlike Portmore where 90 percent of the residents live in formal post 1962 settlements, which were planned and constructed as schemes.

There is the added factor that the residents of this settlement are largely placed here as political refugees, being predominantly PNP supporters who had fled volatile parts of Kingston in the 1970's and 1980's. This, in effect, was a replanting of the established gang network and culture into a squatter settlement accompanied by the economic and social factors that aid gang existence and growth.

The difference in the per capita murder rate between central Village and Portmore speaks volumes for the success of Portmore and its post Independence schemes even though it is still far too high.

**What could have been done differently with the Portmore Project?**

With the significantly high murder rate of gang members, it is only logical that the level of victim/offender overlap would be high.

The principle of the new hope independence communities of Portmore was in essence a brilliant idea. There is a proven history of social conditions playing a part in the propensity of persons to commit crimes and the Portmore post independence housing projects certainly removed squalor and introduced basic infrastructural amenities such as piped water, electricity, roads and concrete housing into the lives of many who were formerly slum dwellers. The random selection, with no intent to replant groups from communities with political affiliation or former cohabiting history, also removed elements that could have led to replanted conflicts.

The failure that stands out is the issue of the squatter (informal) settlements that were located in Portmore for generations before. The placing of these new housing schemes beside and around them, whilst making no effort to remove or improve the existing conditions, simply had the effect of aiding their growth. This growth really only put more persons on the same land mass, causing no real improvement and contributing to greater population density.

The mental effect of having no improved social infrastructure but seeing it supplied in abundance to the new neighbours did nothing to establish harmony with the new inhabitants and the slums and just continued to mirror the homicide activity of Kingston.

A decisive plan should have introduced improvements that mirrored the social infrastructure of the new communities, even if it did not include the new housing; it should have been part of the plan to introduce piped water, electricity and sewerage solutions. A social improvement plan should have been introduced into the informal

settlements that improved the historic residents so that there could have been some equality in the subsequent development of the community that was expected to produce citizens less likely to commit violent crime, the ultimate of which is murder. If this was not possible then a realistic plan for removal and relocation could have been undertaken. The approach to pretending they were not there was doomed to fail.

The gang effect was also underrated. Gangs are formed for many reasons to include social and economic conditions and culture; in this case, the cultural effect seemed to have been ignored. The occupants came from communities with a history of gang activity that dated back generations. Therefore, although they were separated from their former allies, the new communities simply recreated the ingredients to establish new gangs with new names and geographic positioning. The culture to group, defend and attack complimented by the availability of idle time created by lack of opportunity for further schooling and employment, super imposed the old slum culture into the new Portmore.

There was not much that the architects of the post Independence development could do about it as there were limitations to the plan but it has had an impact with almost every one of the new developments having a resident gang noted in the intelligence reports of the SCSPD, with the exceptions being the communities of Bridgeport and Westport. This is not to say that the informal communities that border them do not have gangs, as both communities have strong gang activity in the bordering settlements of Newland, Naggo Head and the Pigeon Shoot fishing beach. When the residents of these informal communities commit murders in their own settlements it is however reported as a murder in the Bridgeport police and the impression conveyed to the public is that they

are Bridgeport community murders. Even within the police reports there is no surgical analysis that divides former shanty town from recent formal developments.

### **Possible solutions that flow from the study**

The study has highlighted the gang effect and most dramatically the significant murder rate of named gang members. This demonstrated an increased risk factor of over a 130 times relating to the likelihood of being a murder victim versus that of a unclassified adult citizen of Portmore.

Armed with the specific findings of this study and the level of victim/offender overlap, there needs to be a public relations campaign that highlights these findings that targets not only the gang members but potential gang members and their influencers such as parents, teachers and successful community law abiding leaders. A far more rigorous effort must be made now to dismantle gangs as it is now obvious that their impact is so significant.

The study has also highlighted the negative effect of the informal community and the need to effect social change relating to roads, electricity, water and sewerage. These should have been done in 1960's when the new developments were constructed; there is, however, still time to right this wrong and introduce this infrastructure as it is not normally paid for in its capital stage by the citizen, but by the government. The roads make the settlements more amenable to policing and the other infrastructure that is considered a normal standard in Portmore, once introduced, will reposition the occupants who currently appear disenfranchised with the obvious imbalance. The method of improvement has to be very unique and carefully implemented, with an aim to improve the social infrastructure and to alter future human behavior.

## **The McKay Gang Prevention Mechanisms (MGPM) – Prevention through Disconnection**

This mechanism and its implementation are designed to intercept and prevent gang activity in Portmore by disrupting the pipeline that feeds its membership, with two prongs. It is based on the belief that gang growth is aided by the environment of squalor and inhuman conditions that exist in the informal communities of Portmore. It is also based on the belief that the current generation of adults are so inculcated, and the environment so poisoned, that it will take a new generation to truly bring about a change in behavior in any dramatic way.

The MGPM therefore speaks to a surgical-like improvement of these slums that remove the zinc boundary partitions, wooden shacks and dirt paths and introduce concrete housing, running water, electricity and asphalted roads. The geographical space that these settlements occupy is not significant, therefore improved roads would not incur a significant cost as compared to building a public school (which, based on population, they would qualify for, but have not gotten). The system of sweat equity could be employed and the infrastructural cost of electricity, water and sewerage, as basics, would still be borne by the government.

The MGPM assumes that the infrastructure is breeding the gangs and by extension the homicides; therefore if you continue to allow persons to live like animals then they will continue to behave likewise. This is supported by the murder figures attributed to the dwellers of the slums, both against each other, and against the dwellers of the new settlements. It is further supported in its comparison to the murder rate of Kingston slums that were not improved and continue to kill in a similar manner.

The second prong also makes the assumption that this infrastructural improvement that is designed to move the informal settlements from virtual refugee camps to actual communities is time consuming, and within that time a new generation of gangs will be produced and unleashed on the citizens of Portmore. Based on the fact that the future killers are known and where they predominantly reside, a drastic intervention needs to be done to counter the exposure to both the living and housing conditions and also the culture of violence and killing that exists there. This is to be achieved by surgically designing a plan to bus male infants from age three, to primary schools that are away from the current toxic environment. This allows for their exposure to an improved school environment and to comingle with persons who are not mentally and emotionally scarred by their surroundings and living conditions.

The steps to introduce this plan does not begin and end with the Ministry of National Security, but rather with all the Ministries responsible for the supplying of infrastructure to communities. There will also have to be input from the sociologists to participate in the conversion of the settlements to communities. The study therefore will be presented to the government with the objective to force them to realize the impact the ignoring of these communities is having on the murder rate of not just the informal settlements, but the entire municipality of Portmore.

To bring online the recommendations contained in this study, it is proposed:

- That it is presented to the government and invested ministries of Jamaica;
- That it will focus first on running water, then sewage services, then roads, then structures and finally, metered electricity;

- That the vulnerable youth will be identified through surveys to ascertain their eligibility, based on gender and age;
- The placing of the eligible youth in schools that are in close enough proximity for practical movement, but likewise far enough to separate them from the influence of the environment in which they are domiciled; and
- The structuring of the daily curriculum of these schools is to include a wide array of extra-curricular activities to ensure protracted engagement on a daily basis.

This approach will ensure that as the youth who are benefiting under the program become older, the program grows in tandem with the increase, with the bussing to continue till the end of the affected youths secondary education.

The program is significantly ambitious in its intent to alter the homicide rate through dramatic targeted social intervention so it is anticipated to be a costly endeavour; but the price of doing nothing would be catastrophic.

Historically, bussing was used in an attempt to end segregation in the United States of America but was also intended as a tool to broaden the opportunities of African-Americans children, who were attending inferior schools. In this case it serves as an environment adjustment with an aim to saving lives by reducing the raw material of human lives being available for recruitment to gangs.

The management of this program should use extraordinary measures to create after school activities in order to, quite frankly, limit the young males' exposure to the negative environment of the informal settlement; with an aim to developing differed mentalities and personalities that are not conducive to gang membership and



killing. Additionally, the amelioration of other substantial social ills such as poor nutrition and health care also need to be monitored, as this type of deprivation makes the intervention and prevention mechanism harder to achieve.

There needs to be close supervision and plans for this generation of males that are destined to live in similar squalor as the last generation; with the intent to ensure that there is the ability to micro-manage their future opportunities. This is not just as a means to protect would be future victims, but also to protect them from themselves.

### **Resistance to intervention/ prevention**

If not strategically communicated, the prevention mechanism as suggested under the MGPM will likely receive push back from the parents and guardians of the targeted youth in the communities. Since the mechanism will involve bussing to schools that are located outside of the community, it will also mean significant time away from home but this will be ameliorated by ensuring that resources are made available to the program that will provide for the nutritional and basic healthcare needs of the enrolees, coupled with adequately and appropriately trained adult supervision. The provision these services will make the convincing of the parents and guardians (many of whom may be of limited or no income) to allow for the participation of the youth in the program of the participants, a lot easier. The use of the words *improvement* and *opportunity* are important selling points to the success of the mechanism, as many do not see or care to worry about the gang influence on their children, until it becomes a behavioral issue. Sadly, they do not recognize the culture of the community as a threat until deviant and delinquent behavior begins to manifest.

Law enforcement also needs to be so structured to reduce killings by anyone, inclusive of themselves, as the exposure to this level of murder can in itself become a cultural norm. This can be done by overwhelming the community with superior numbers to dissuade resistance and by retraining the officers in less lethal means of defence. In the grand scheme of things, it is not an unobtainable ambition; the geographical size of the slums is not significant and the amount of young males to be micro-managed numbers in the low hundreds.

The cost of the continued existence of the gang creating apparatus is about 75 murders upward a year. Although only 55% of the murders under study are committed in the informal communities, based upon anecdotal evidence gleaned from experienced law enforcement officers stationed in the division, the suspects and accused of homicides in the formal communities are informal dwellers - at an average rate of 90% over the period under study. Additionally, although there are indicators as to which families are more likely to produce future gang members based factors such as extreme poverty levels, familial exposure to current gang members and close geographic proximity, there is still no true way to know which of the male infants are going to become gang members: this is understood. Therefore, resources will have to be expended on all the youth of which only a few are truly likely to feed the growth of the gangs, but this is unavoidable. This will lead us to do one of two things: firstly, we can conduct further studies to isolate the high risk group at the aforementioned system or secondly, we can expend the resources to insure we shelter the entire generation of males from the gang factory we have helped to create.

**Police Cynicism: a barrier to the MGPM success?**

A cynic expects nothing but the worst in human behaviour and it does not take long for police to become cynical (Caplan, 2003). Numerous studies have documented and evaluated the causes and effects of cynicism amongst law enforcement personnel (Albanese, 1999; Graves, 1996; Knapp Commission, 1972; Sykes & Brent, 1983; Bennett & Schmitt, 2002) and police cynicism, defined as a “contemptuous distrust of human nature and motives” (Behrend, 1980), is a trait that many officers develop and exhibit. Therefore, cynicism is a problem within police departments internationally and this certainly includes the ranks of the JCF and, by extension, the SCSPD.

The solutions to the homicide crisis in Portmore that have been recommended in this study will involve police participation and will therefore have to treat police cynicism as a challenge to overcome. Due to the hardened view that law enforcement officers can develop, it is a believable outcome that negative interaction with the police may cause effected youth to develop anti-police sentiments, leading to the creation of gang sympathies and fostering membership.

One of the positives of the suggested solutions however is that the interventions under the MGPM takes place long before the interaction between the subject child and law enforcement begins, as the gangs are the platform for converting normal persons to offenders. Consequently, the re-education and re-culturing of the police force is therefore a priority. This will begin with the molding of the minds of new recruits to the police academy and end with the perseverance of the agents of change within the JCF. Macro policies impact micro behaviour, and if it is monitored by an organization that is serious about real social improvement, then it will be serious about enforcing the limiting of negative communication.

The members of the rank and file of the JCF are unified in their exasperation with the assembly line of manufactured offenders. We accept that the environment is the cause; and the offenders are therefore victims of this environment. This is why the solutions *will* work: many officers with medium to long term service are tired of arresting the sons and grandsons of the men they arrested one and two generations ago.

The cynicism can be controlled because we realize that the solutions that are law enforcement-only based, without the inclusion of social intervention, have not worked. We also realize that if we, like those produced via the revolving door of poverty, limited opportunities and substandard living conditions, had grown up in the environment under study - we too would become victims of it; of becoming an offender, and a likely victim of homicide.

My colleagues in JCF, like myself, believe this. With over twenty years experience of being a member of units conducting Special Operations – units charged with the mandate to investigate, arrest and prosecute in circumstances that will likely end in violent contact with offenders – despite my greatest efforts to stem the propagation of this cycle, it simply has not worked . We have brought many to justice, but more just keep being produced; human suffering has continued. My efforts as a law enforcement officer may have saved lives, but it has not improved the quality of life of the citizens. They still live in fear of their families, their neighbors and their police force. This is because we cannot alter human behavior in a free society by fear. The predators once produced are going to prey. The presence of law enforcement will never be enough to prevent criminal conduct or violence with groups that live zinc fences apart. I realized long ago that the change had to take place within the factory that produces the behaviour and this is what

manifested in the new, formal developments in Portmore; people changed and behaved human when their environment became humane.

My history is unique because few members of the JCF have served on special squads for as long as I have as the system normally functions differently with the regular rotation of officers being rotated around different arms of the constabulary. My time on the job, my type of job, my studies and my failure to bring senseless violence as a behavioral norm to an end has forced me to seek out an alternative solution.

This study and its recommended solutions is the alternative to having my son fighting the same war that I and my father (he also being a serving officer for over thirty years) fought, and failing as we have failed.

### **The Importance of this Study and Added Value to Existing Research**

The knowledge and study of the victim/offender overlap is by no means new and as such, this study has been predicated on and guided by previous literature on the subject and subsequently has been produced to add to the abundance of knowledge available, whilst introducing elements specific to homicides.

This study looked on not only a sample, but on every single murder in the period under study. Through the utilization of investigative and intelligence analytical data to ascertain the classification of the victims from a concentrated area in one parish, this assisted in ruling out variables that may have existed in one murder zone versus another. The similar conditions and characteristics of the victims allowed for the close scrutiny of their common factors, to include: poverty, informal dwellings, gang influences and culture. The study therefore is particularly useful for probing the victim/offender overlap phenomenon relative to murder.

This study is about Portmore. It is not about the entire parish of St. Catherine nor the country of Jamaica, but the seriousness of the violent epidemic of homicides in Portmore, the effect of the victim/offender phenomenon and the proposed solutions.

The question could be asked, why Portmore? The succinct answer is simply: Portmore is unique. It represented an effort for the first time in a post Independence Jamaica that serious housing solutions were being planned for the poor.

This study specifically studied why so many homicides occurred in conditions which should have experienced so few.

This study identified the danger of squatter settlements and the realities of housing persons in nearby communities to become prey. It also shows the danger to citizens who live in squatter settlements who choose either an honest life or a criminal career.

Although these facts are present, this study attempts to tabulate, print and present in a structured manner these findings, raising the awareness of the level of victim/offender overlap in Portmore, serving as a tool to deter and disincentivise young men in becoming criminals.

We now know the effect of gangs on homicide activity in Portmore. The use of this information when it is presented impacts police strategy and the allocation of resources. It also impacts approaches by social scientists when designing intervention programs. Most importantly is that a solution to this crisis exists and is presented in this study through the theory created.

Although this study looks on Portmore the knowledge gleaned can be applied to other Jamaican and Caribbean communities that informal housing settlements exist. The solution to the Portmore syndrome can also be applied in these territories.

I believe the study is on an important subject and conducted on a worthy community that can be applied to other communities. It can help others succeed in areas where the conceptualisers failed and can convince our leadership to help us to right these wrongs. Whilst the period under study encompassed 2015-2018, homicides in the SCSPD up to December 2019 have already exceeded 100. Solutions are needed quickly and this study may speed them up.

### **Conclusion**

I believe the study reflects that the driving force behind Portmore's murder cycle is the gangs and the informal settlements. Though small and less inhabited, they are the primary source of gang membership.

I believe the social interventions noted here are in many ways standard norms in most countries of the post World War Two era and certainly a norm in wider Jamaica, however these interventions are simply overdue in being supplied to the informal settlements of Portmore. In a similar manner that the post independence settlers that were moved to Portmore rejected the conduct and culture of the Kingston slums by to a large part ceasing in this activity after being replanted in a formal structured environment, so it is likely to occur if the same is done to make the informal settlements become regularized into formal settlements. I acknowledge the shortfall of maintaining the group together and the history of conflict, but that is only one factor amongst many that will change.

The proven and surprising levels of victim/offender overlap exposed in this study needs to be the propaganda tool that highlights the risk factor that almost guarantees a life cut short and in effect, wasted. If it is known by future gang members or current influencers it can and will impact some, if not all.

An acknowledgement that we blundered and a commitment to remedy it is the first step. The step that follows is a decision to fix it.

Persons are murdered nowhere in the Caribbean like they are in Jamaica. Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world, has such a supply of guns that they export weapons to Jamaica in a vibrant guns-for-drugs black market; yet it does not have a rate of murder that can compare to that of Jamaica. In fact, in the entire Pan-American region, only Brazil and Mexico can compare with the per capita murder rate that occurs in Jamaica, year after year, and they still lag behind.

We can seek to explain this murder rate by highlighting factors such as poverty, slum culture, political influences, and historic family and intra-community feuds that have existed for generations; however Portmore has none of these factors by design. The conceptualizers of Portmore wanted to create a new city without any of the contributing factors present in the killing fields of Kingston and historic Spanish Town, and they delivered on their promise. Yet the murder rate of this newly created municipality continues to produce per capita murder rates that mirror the traditional slums built in the pre-independence era of Jamaica's history.

This study has examined this phenomenon by examining the victim rather than the offender and is unique because of these two factors:

- 1) there has never been a study of Portmore's homicide cycle with an aim to unearthing its causes, and

- 2) without doubt, it has never been done by utilising victimology analysis.

The study has also determined several other issues, namely:



1) it has highlighted the significant contribution the informal settlements make to the inordinately high murder rate of the municipality despite its under representation in population or geographical occupation, and

2) it has unearthed how easily this fact had been shrouded by a system of reporting crime through police station zones that carry names of the new Portmore developments.

This information will have a significant impact on, and contribution to, the formulation of strategies that target offenders and would-be offenders. It also allows for the intervention of social scientists to fix the contributing elements that are creating killers.

The solutions that were formulated in this study are workable and realistic and if followed, can bring about the changes in Portmore's informal settlement culture that if not changed, no real improvements will ever occur.

Before this study there was no effort to look into the contribution of formal versus informal settlements and to compare this with population size. This study has placed the evidence where it is visible and obvious; and solutions can be applied from the study because the trends have been identified.

The mechanism of “*intervention through disconnection*” is new in its extremity because it argues for an almost total separation. This differs from interventions that more commonly have influences introduced into the community; this mechanism suggests a virtual effort of removal of young male children for almost all their waking hours. The theory that motivates this solution is based on the belief that the environment is poisoned and will continue to poison all that it is allowed to indoctrinate, occurring by exposure to the influences of the slums.

This mechanism can also be applied to other informal settlements in Jamaica and in other countries in the world where unplanned informal settlements have morphed into garrison-style killing fields.

The gang influence is always a major factor under consideration when spiralling homicides occur; however, in this study it is proved. Not by only one investigative department, but by two. Not by sampling or generalizing, but by putting all 381 murders under the microscope and, more importantly, the victims of these murders. This indictment on gang activity and its propensity to lead to homicides will impact how the St. Catherine South Police Division designs its homicide prevention strategies and its investigative methodologies.

The presence of gang association or gang related activity in almost every victim is a lesson in how gangs and crime is inexplicably linked and to a large degree dismisses any belief that criminals operate independently and alone. There is no reason that this characteristic could not be assumed in other criminal zones In Jamaica and the Caribbean. This study can and hopefully will influence the laws that exist in relation to gang membership and the need to introduce harsh sentences to discourage gang existence.

The occurrence of victim/offender overlap occurring at a rate of 73% is a message that this study will carry to the young men of Portmore and the 78% found in the SCSPD will be circulated to the south of the parish as a whole the essence of which will be: *that criminal offending is the road to being a victim of homicide*. This perhaps is the most important aspect of the study, that is, its ability to discourage not just Portmore or St. Catherine youth from criminal conduct, but Jamaican youth on a whole.

It will play a purpose in how homicide is viewed by the government and the public. This also is important as it gives a direct indication of what leads to a high murder rate: criminal activity and criminal association.

Squatter settlements, gang activity and criminal conduct have been proven in this study to be a driving force behind the murder rate in Portmore despite all the good intentions of the municipalities' creators.

The problem is identified.

The designed mechanism is feasible.

What now remains is to see if the will exists, to fix it.

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